

# THE WIRE

MUSIC NOW AND ALL WAYS

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august 1991  
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*for Prince. Photo by*  
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#### the wire

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world headquarters: Unit G & H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN, England.  
Telephone 071-580 7522, Fax: 071-323 6905

Editor/Publisher • Richard Cook  
Deputy Editor • Graham Lock  
Art Director • Brooke Auchincloss-Foreman  
Contributing Editor • Mark Sinker  
Advertising Manager • Roger Thomas  
Administration Manager • Adele Yaron  
Founder • Anthony Wood

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Canadian address: The Wire, 85 Cleveland Drive, Unit 2, Ajax, Ontario L1Z 1E2, CANADA. Tel 416 428 7541

Contributors this month: Mike Aderton, Jean-Henri Bernas, Douglas Cope, John Coshin, Jonathan Cox, Nick Coleman, Jack Cook, Tim Corbin, Mark Daint, Mike Fish, Bruce A Forman, Jill Farnsworth, Hopy Glen, Andy Hamilton, Alex Harrison, Tony Horrocks, David Ho, Nick Kimberley, Mike King, Simon Lake, Andy Lunn, Kerry Macintosh, Phil McNeill, Brian Morton, Stuart Nicholson, Brian Priestley, Roland Romanos, Penny Rol, Derek Rodgers, Stephen Spiller, Gus Spivey, Neil Taylor, Ben Watson, Philip Watson, Nick White, Barry Witherden, Xaver Young

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★ **WIRE PHOTOGRAPH** Andrew Pottery is one of four artists featured in the **Jazz On The Wall** exhibition, which runs until 17 August at Swiss Cottage Library Exhibition Hall in London NW3. Other artists on show are painter Sharon Lutchman, sculptor Mike Shepherd and photographer Julia Maloof. Opening times are Mon and Thurs 9.30am-8pm, Tues 10am-6pm, Fri 9.30am-6pm, Sat 9.30am-5pm (closed Weds and Sun). Details from 071 860 5878.

★ **CANADA'S HI-ENERGY** jazzers **Shuffle Demons** will play **York Arts Centre** (30 July); **Manchester Band On The Wall** (31); **Leeds Granary Wharf** (2 August); **Snoekton On Tees Festival** (3); **Hull Kingston Bar** (4, lunchtime); **Hebden Bridge Trades Club** (4).

★ **RADIO THREE** will repeat a live concert by the **Stan Getz Quartet** as a tribute to the tenorman, who died last June. The concert, recorded in Glasgow in 1989, can be heard on 24 August from 10-12pm.



*James Pohl demonstrates how to play the flute with your hands behind your back. See how he does it live on Icebreaker's CMN tour this autumn. Photo by Stephen Speller*

#### NEW MUSIC HITS THE TRAIL

**JAMES POHL'S** Icebreaker, Evelyn Glennie and Henry Threadgill's Very Very Circus are among the artists due to tour in the 1991-92 Contemporary Music Network season. Full line-up is Mike Gibbs Band w/John Scofield (9-21 October); John Caskin's chamber opera *The Gallop* (17-26 October, 26-30 November); Monry Alexander's *Ivory & Steel* (6-15 November); Geri Allen, Charlie Haden, Paul Motian Trio plus Louis Sclavis Qtr (21-29 November); Icebreaker, playing works by Louis Andriessen, Steve Marriott and plus Anavas (30 January - 5 February); Evelyn Glennie w/ Bournemouth Sinfonietta, playing the world premiere of Dominic Muldowney's *Precantion Concerto* also (4-15 February); Voices, w/Linda Hise and Rajan and Sajan Misra, performing works by Seels and Param Vir (27 February - 8 March); Hilliard Ensemble, singing world premieres by Gorecki and Caskin plus pieces by Pärt and Perotin (3-13 March) Complete dare lists to follow

★ **RA WILL** return! Sun Ra and his **Omniore Utera 21st Century Orchestra** are the star attraction at this year's **Manchester Festival**, which also features Shabba Ranks, Branford Marsalis, Lonnie Liston Smith and John Martyn

among many others. Highlights of the festival, which runs throughout September at various venues, include Sun Ra (1 September), Branford Marsalis Band, Marcus Roberts (5), Jim Pepper/Brian Abrahams Group (5); Lonnie Liston

Smith Band (11), Remmy Ongala & Orchestre Super Marimba (11); Shabba Ranks (14); Beverley Craven (16); Martin Carthy/Dave Swarbrick (18); Penguin Cafe Qnt (19); Snake Davis & The Chummers (19); Mopo Buford & The Harpbreakers (23); Jim Mullen/Graham Dean Band (26); Andy Sheppard's In Commotion (27); Cleveland Warwick Band (28); John Martyn Band (28). Details from 061 234 1964.

★ **MINIMALIST COMPOSER** Philip Glass brings his Ensemble to London's Royal Festival Hall for a week of concerts from 1-6 September. The concerts will feature screenings of Godfrey Reggio's films *Koyaanisqatsi* (1-3) and *Powaqqatsi* (5, 6 plus late-night screening on 6), accompanied by live versions of the Glass soundtracks played by his 17-piece Ensemble. Details from 071 928 8800.

★ **TWO UPCOMING** rock festivals of likely interest to *The Wire*'s readers are the **Manchester Cities In The Park** festival, in memory of influential post-punk producer Martin Hannett, with Wonder Stuff, Beautiful South, Soup Dragons, OMD, Cabaret Voltaire, Buzzcocks, Railway Children (3 August); **Electronic, Happy Mondays, De La Soul, A Certain Ratio, Durutti Column, Cath Carroll** (4) - details from 0836 404992; and the **Reading Festival**, with Sonic Youth, Iggy Pop, Silverfish, Babes In Toyland (23 August); **The Fall, De La Soul, Blur** (24); **Nirvana, Ebb, Gangs, Swervedriver** (25).

And two London pop gigs to

notes the Neville Brothers at Brixton Academy (10 August), the Richard Thompson Band at the Town & Country (18).

**\*LEADING SAXIST** Courtney Pine takes his US quartet – with Kenny Kirkland, Chatter Mollert, Marvin 'Smitty' Smith – on a four-city UK tour this month courtesy of Scotland's Assembly Direct and the Silk Cut City Jazz initiative. They visit Birmingham Town Hall (9 August); London Town & Country (10); Manchester Palace (11); Glasgow Pavilion (12).

**\*LONDON'S MAJOR** classical concerts in August focus on the Mozart bi-centennial. The South Bank has a Mozart Now festival (24 August – 8 September) performed entirely on period instruments. Performers include the Orchestra Of The Age Of Enlightenment (with conductors Frans Bruggen and Arnold Oustman), Trevor Pinnock w/ The English Concert, the London Fortepiano Trio, Arleen Augér, Malcolm Bilson, Robert Levin and Melvyn Tan. Major highlights include a concert performance of *Die Entführung Aus Der Serail* conducted by John Eliot Gardiner with the English Baroque Soloists (29 August) plus 'The 1791 Weekend' – two days of talks and music from Mozart's last year, featuring Roger Norrington and the London Classical Players (31 August/1 September). Also in August (though not part of the festival), Opera Factory revive their production of *Così Fan Tutte* (3, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23). Details from 071 928 8800



The Carla Bley Trio. Carla plays keyboard; Steve plays bass and Andy plays gypsy jazz. Bley/Swallow photo by Jean-Marc Bataux.

#### THE INS AND OUTS AT OUTSIDE IN

EGBERTO GISMONTI, the Carla Bley Trio with Steve Swallow and Andy Sheppard, Bob Stewart's Front Line Band and fusionists Vital Information are among the artists appearing at this year's Outside In Festival, which takes place on 31 August and 1 September at the Hawth Centre in Crawley, West Sussex. Full line-up at the festival, co-sponsored by *The Wire*, is: Egberto Gismonti, Vital Information, Stan Tracey Octet, Jim Pepper, Django Bates's Delightful Precipice, Orphy Robinson's Anavav, Evidence, Steve Berry's Foolish Heart, Claron Fracture Zone, Frank Williams Band, Sylvan Richardson Band and the Clandemonium Project featuring 'new wave Scots' John Rae Collective, Tom Bancroft Big Band, Chuck Lyall Qr, Orange Ear Ensemble, Brian Kellock Trio w/o (31 August); Carla Bley Trio, Bob Stewart First Line Band, Hermeto Pascoal, Louis Moholo's Viva La Black, Julian Joseph Qr w/Peter King, Bheki Maseku, Julian Argüelles Qr, Jon Lloyd Qr, Phil Minton/Veryan Weston, Alan Wilkinson Group, Sioned Jones and Billy Jenkins's Big Fight – in which the plucky guitarist goes 12 three-minute rounds with percussionists Steve Argüelles, Thee Lijere and Steve Noble (1 September). Ticket prices are: one-day, £14 or £13 in advance (concessions £13, £12); two-day, £25 or £23 in advance (concessions £23, £21). Details from 0293 551636.

**\*CECIL TAYLOR'S** Feel Trio, with William Parker and Tony Oxley, the Gerry

Mulligan Qr, Cleveland Watkiss, Leon Redbone and Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion are

among the artists appearing at this year's Brecon Jazz Festival, which takes place in Brecon, Powys, Wales, from 16–18 August. Main concerts include Ruby Braff/Scott Hamilton Qtr, Cleveland Watkiss, Jools Holland (16); Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion, Joe Pass, Rebirth Brass Band, Ruby Braff Trio, Dave McKenna (17); Cecil Taylor's Feel Trio, Gerry Mulligan Qr, Leon Redbone, Vital Information (18). Other artists appearing throughout the festival include Joe Lee Wilson w/Kirk Lightsey Trio, Julian Joseph Qr, Dick Morrissey, Claron Fracture Zone and many more. Details from 0874 5557.

Cecil Taylor and The Feel Trio also play London's Jazz Cafe from 5–7 August. See *In Town Tonight*, p6, for details.

**\*NEW MUSIC** highlights at this year's BBC Promenade Concerts include Steve Reich's *Desert Music* (7 August), the world premiere of Witold Lutosławski's *Chantefables Et Chantefables* (8); the UK premiere of Henri Dutilleul's *Mystère de l'instant* (14); the London premiere of Brian Ferneyhough's *Seven Stories* (19); Sofia Guabaidolina's *Offering* (4 September); the European premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's *Byzantium* (6); and the world premiere of Hugh Wood's *Piano Concerto* (10). All concerts are at London's Royal Albert Hall. Details from 071 823 9998.

**\*THE SHORTY** Rogers/Bud Shank Lighthouse All Stars, the Carla Bley Trio, Egberto Gismonti, Joe Pass and Leon Redbone are among the artists who will be appear-

ing in one of Edinburgh's three August music festivals! The TDK Round Midnight Jazz Festival has the Carol Kidd Orchestra (26); Tommy Smirh Band, John Rae Collective (27); Egberto Gismonti (28); Clusone Trio (Han Bennink, Michael Moore, Ernst Reijseger) (29); Carla Bley Trio w/ Steve Swallow and Andy Sheppard (30) – plus late-night concerts by the Bud Shank/Shanty Rogers Lighthouse All Stars (19); Carol Kidd Trio w/ George Fame (27, 28) and the Tam White Band (30). All concerts are at the Queen's Hall. Details from 031 668 2019.

Just prior to Round Midnight comes the Edinburgh International Jazz Festival and the first-ever Edinburgh International Blues Festival. The jazz festival has Joe Pass (19); shares the Lighthouse All Stars with Round Midnight (19, late-night); and also features Barney Kessel Trio plus Oliver Jones Trio (20); Rebirth Brass Band (23) and much more; while the blues festival includes Leon Redbone, Jimmy Rogers, the Lonnie Brooks Band w/o (20, 21). Details on both these festivals from 031 557 1642.

**in town tonight**

*August's selected jazz and blues gigs*

**Colchester Arts Centre** (0206 377301): Festival Of New & Improvised Music – Chris Burn, Signifier, Anima, Chris Andrews Trio, Mick Newman (27, 3–12pm).

**Hemel Hempstead Blue Note Club** (0442 242827): Roadside Picnic (1); Vic Hugo's Picnic (29). **Leicester Haymarket Theatre** (0533

539797): James Taylor Qt (24); Barney Kessel Trio, Oliver Jones Trio (27).

**Manchester Band On The Wall** (061 362 6625): Some Other Country (8); Joe Lee Wilson w/Kirk Lighsey Qt (15). **Taunton Brewhouse Theatre** (0823 283244): Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion (5).

And this month's London highlights. **Bass Clef NI** (071 729 2476): Roberto Pla's Latin Jazz Ensemble (9). **The Edge W2** (071 262 4127): Chris Bascoe Qt (1); Funk Dictators (2); Tony Remy Qt (3); Kiev Jazz Trio (12).

**Jazz Cafe NW1** (071 284 4358): Julian Bahula's Jabula (4); Cecil Taylor's Feel Trio (5–7); Joey DeFrancesco's Young Lions (8–10); Johnny Griffin Qt (12–17); Zala (18); James Blood Ulmer Blues Experience (19–24); Maceo Parker (25–30).

**Purcell Room SE1** (071 928 8800): Nana Vasconcelos's Heartbeat – solo music/theatre show (2–10). **Red Rose Club N7** (071 263 7265): John Russell Project (18). **Ronnie Scott's W1** (071 439 0747): Betty Carter (29 July – 3 August); Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion (5–10); Arturo Sandoval (12–31). **The Swan W6** (081 748 1043): Pere McPhail/Jon Corbett (6); NANCY (13); Spontaneous Music Ensemble (20); Alan Wilkinson (27).

**Tenor Clef NI** (071 729 2476): Joey Calderazzo (1–3); Cecil Payne (19–24). **Waterlow Park N6** (071 860 5866): Jazz In The Park – free afternoon concerts: Andy Sheppard's In Co-Motion (28 July); Tony Remy's Lateral Thinking, The Breeze (4 August); Mastura, Butchers Of Disinction (11); The Jazz Garden, Mark Lockheart Qt (18); Beaujolais Band, Candela (25).

**KK NULL: NOISE TERRORIST**

*by Biba Kopf*

IT TOOK Nagisa Oshima's Japanese hardcore movie classic *In The Realm Of The Senses* 15 years to obtain a certificate in this country. Luckily, outside times of war, sound is not subject to the same scrutiny as vision. Just because Kazuyuki K Null's extreme noise guitar erotica slips past the censors unannounced doesn't make it any less an intense, unsettling or arousing an experience than Oshima's essential cinema.

The realm of passion enclosed by Null's noise is airless and pitch-black. It commands a total readjustment of normal listening expectations, if more than sensory deprivation is to be felt from this most uncompromising of musics. But the longer the exposure, the more adept the ear is at picking out myriad detail seared in its blackness. The shock of the first physical blasts gives way to pleasure, as Null illuminates his music's darkest recesses with blanket lightning falls of electrical noise. The brighter the blinding white light, the better you notice the musicality sustaining Null's attack. Various pedalled FX orchestrate his violent chordings and scrapings, creating sonic envelopes full to bursting with difficult emotion.

No prizes for guessing Null's extreme guitar noise begets extreme reactions. It was just too much for one woman during his 1990 tour of America, who crawled through barbed wire to pull on his FX pedals to bring the evening to a premature climax. Fortunately, not all noise saboteurs succeeded, and the tour has been recorded for posterity on the CD *Sonicfuck USA*.

If the Japanese erotic guitar terrorist is a relatively new phenomenon here, KK Null's work has already aroused the admiration of international noise wreckers John Zorn and Fred Frith. His other collaborators include Japanese *musique concrete* maestro Merzbow, while his group Zeni Geva number Japanese hardcore/noise frontrunners The Boredoms and The Ruins among their contemporaries.

With Zeni Geva, KK Null's roaring guitar noise is all the more ferocious for being leashed to slow, heaving and falling rhythm figures. Slamming against such irresistible restraints creates the music's almost unbearable tension, specially as Zeni Geva are not given to providing release. "Slam King", the 16-minute opening track of their deeply moving (in the seismological sense) Pathological disc *Maximum Money Monster* doesn't resolve itself so much as gradually wear itself to a standstill. Their titles are accurately descriptive: why not enjoy "Blaze", "Blackout", "Skullfuck"? Meanwhile, a resetting of Brecht's "On Suicide" in a kamikaze noise context reveals Zeni Geva as both sensitive and innovative interpreters of Brecht's rarely-aired desperate hour. The deferred end of "On Suicide" is an ideal beginning for newcomers to KK Null's work.

KK Null lives at home with his guitar and his mother.

(Null produce available c/o Nux Organisation, 3-690-47 Hibarigaoka, Zama, Kanagawa, Japan. Zeni Geva's *Maximum Money Monster* is released on Pathological, dist UK by Revolver.)

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• now's the time

## RICK MARGITZA: SAXOPHONIST

by Mike Furb

THERE'VE BEEN some fine records emanating from the new school at Blue Note — John Scofield, Michel Petrucciani among older hands, Joey Calderazzo, Ralph Peterson, our own Tommy Smith in the fresh-faced end. But I don't think any of them have surpassed Rick Margitza's *Hope*, an outstanding record which is going to slip into the realm of undiscovered classics unless it gets a belated break. In what is ostensibly a familiar tenor-plus-rhythm date, Margitza took extraordinary care to vary approaches to every track: discreet use of brass on "Walls", a Metheny-like deployment of voices on "Song Of Hope", a plangent soprano line pitched against the skipping, *Sesame Street* sort of groove on "Recess", austere pretty strings on "Heritage". Plus "The Journey", the most insidious track to bother my waking hours for months.

Rick's own playing goes measure for measure with the tunes: full tone, a Brecker-Rollins muscularity, a striving for original phrases which doesn't put undue strain on his delivery. Rising 30, he's more mature than the post-grad school of young jazzers, yet youthful enough to be classed among the new breed. Here for a couple of dates in June, slight, stocky, trim, soft-spoken, Rick is a modest spokesman for his own work.

Here's the biography: father a violinist with Detroit Symphony, mother's father played bass with Glenn Miller, cello with Charlie Parker. He came home with an oboe to play in the school band, and mom said, would you like to hear a record with an oboe on it? She put out Charlie Parker with strings. Rick heard Bird and that was that.

The young Margitza schooled in Michigan, Berkeley and Miami, putting in as much playing as he could, then got a job at the Sheraton in New Orleans, playing straight-ahead six nights a week. He was on the road with Maynard Ferguson for six months when pal Matt Pierson, working for Blue Note, passed a demo on to Bruce Lundvall, who loved it. So did Tommy LiPuma, then working in the studio with Miles Davis. When LiPuma played it *over the phone* to Miles, the old man growled, "Tell him he has a job". Rick found he had two days to get his stuff together for a European tour.

"I loved it and hated it," he recalls. "Being around Miles was extraordinary. I feel blessed to have been part of the legacy. But a couple of people in the band hated jazz, couldn't read music, had never even heard *Kind Of Blue*. I think I did a good job, but the music was quite constricting, not very open."

He returned to New York to encounter a familiar situation — "You go there to hook up work and then you don't play there much. My reputation isn't big enough to play the Vanguard for a week yet, and in some of the more local clubs, where a lot of the great music happens, so many people are waiting for a gig that your name only comes up every couple of months." Even after a couple of fine records — *Colour* and *Hope*, the former a more straightforward set. At least Margitza has had a strong reception in Europe, where he had played 17 gigs in three weeks. He has recorded a third album of standard material, which might cause a twinge of disappointment after the original creativity of *Hope*.

"To be truthful, I would like to have gone for a continuation of *Hope*. But we didn't make any money back on the first two records,





**MIKE GIBBS BAND with JOHN SCOFIELD 9-21 October**

You've heard the music, now see it live. Mike Gibbs' recording, *Big Music*, featuring John Scofield, was called "sophisticated, funky...big in every way" by *Wire*. The tour goes a step further with new music and a sound bigger than ever.

Kenny Wheeler	Trumpet	Julian Argüelles	Reeds
John Barclay	Trumpet	John Taylor	Piano
Stuart Brooks	Trumpet	Steve Swallow	Bass
Chris Pyne	Trombone	Billy Stewart	Drums
David Stewart	Trombone	and others	
Tony Coe	Reeds		

*A Rolling Rock Jazz Tour*

NEWCASTLE Playhouse Thu 17 October  
NEWCASTLE Playhouse Fri 18 October  
DURHAM Quorn House Sat 19 October  
LONDON Phoenix Arts Centre Tue 22 October  
LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall Thu 24 October  
SHEFFIELD Ponds Forge Complex Sat 28 October  
MANCHESTER Royal Northern College of Music Tue 28 November  
HUDDERSFIELD St Paul's Hall Wed 27 November  
COVENTRY Warwick Arts Centre Fri 29 November  
COVENTRY Warwick Arts Centre Sat 30 November

**MONTY ALEXANDER'S IVORY & STEEL**  
**6-15 November**

Monty Alexander	Piano and vocals
Ray Carless	Saxophone
Harry Beckatt	Trumpet
Dennis Rollins	Trombone
Winston Clifford	Drums

plus three players to be announced

*Ivory & Steel* is the band formed by Monty Alexander to celebrate the musical heritage of the West Indies in a tour featuring reggae, Jamaican folk songs, calypso and originals combining jazz and Caribbean influences.

*A Rolling Rock Jazz Tour*

LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall Thu 21 November  
SOUTHAMPTON Turner Sims Hall, University Fri 22 November  
BRIGHTON Gardner Centre Sat 23 November  
CHILTERNHAM Town Hall Sun 24 November  
BRACKNELL Wilde Theatre, South Hill Park Mon 26 November  
SHEFFIELD The Leadmill Tue 26 November  
MANCHESTER Royal Northern College of Music Wed 27 November  
LEEDS Irish Centre Thu 28 November  
BIRMINGHAM Adrian Boult Hall Fri 29 November

**ICEBREAKER 27 November - 8 December**

Programme to include:

Loula Andriessen	Hoketus
John Godfrey	Euthanasia and Garden Implements
Michael Torke	New Work

Young, energetic, and very loud, Icebreaker performs minimalist funk with the style of a rock band. The 16-piece group plays electric, assertive, new music with guts. Icebreaker takes an alternative approach to new music performance, retaining the intelligence, but leaving the academic baggage behind.

**GOLEM 17-26 October, 26-30 November**

A new production by Northern Stage and Northern Sinfonia

Mysticism and magic combine to bring the Golem to life. Formed from clay, the superhuman giant is created to protect his village, but the villagers shun the outsider and tragedy results. The Golem legend is the forerunner of classics like *Frankenstein* and *Prometheus*. With award-winning music, this is new opera like you've never seen it.

LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall Wed 8 October  
BATH The Forum Thu 10 October  
MANCHESTER Royal Northern College of Music Fri 11 October  
DURHAM Quorn House Sat 12 October  
NEWCASTLE Playhouse Sun 13 October  
SOUTHAMPTON Turner Sims Hall, University Mon 14 October  
LIVERPOOL Philharmonic Hall Tue 16 October  
NORWICH University of East Angles Wed 16 October  
LEEDS Irish Centre Thu 17 October  
BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall Fri 18 October  
SHEFFIELD Lyceum Sun 20 October  
COVENTRY Warwick Arts Centre Mon 21 October

BRACKNELL Wilde Theatre, South Hill Park Wed 6 November  
LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall Thu 7 November  
BATH University Hall Fri 9 November  
BIRMINGHAM Adrian Boult Hall Sat 9 November  
BRADFORD Alhambra Studio Sun 10 November  
SHEFFIELD The Leadmill Tue 12 November  
MANCHESTER Royal Northern College of Music Wed 13 November  
CHILTERNHAM Town Hall Thu 14 November  
OATINGTON Great Hall Fri 16 November

**GERI ALLEN, CHARLIE HADEN, PAUL MOTIAN with  
LOUIS SCLAVIS QUARTET 21-29 November**

This trio needs no introduction. Veterans Haden and Motian join forces with young pianist Allen, currently making a splash in a traditionally male pond. French bass clarinetist/saxophonist Louis Sclavis pushes the boundaries of jazz to the limit with expressionist music ranging from lyricism to funk. Sclavis has appeared at the Glasgow and Bath Jazz Festivals and was named Best International Artist at the 1990 *Wire Jazz Awards*.

*A Rolling Rock Jazz Tour*

YORK St Jack Lyons Hall Wed 27 November  
LIVERPOOL Christ's College Thu 28 November  
MANCHESTER Royal Northern College of Music Fri 29 November  
SHEFFIELD Octagon Sun 1 December  
BRIGHTON Gardner Centre Tue 3 December  
BATH Michael Tippett Centre Wed 4 December  
LONDON Queen Elizabeth Hall Thu 5 December  
SOUTHAMPTON Turner Sims Hall, University Fri 6 December  
BIRMINGHAM Adrian Boult Hall Sun 9 December

and budgets being what they are... I have Joey (Calderazzo) on piano, Bob Hurst on bass, Jeff Watts on drums. I was looking for a band that sounded good but had never played together. It's not a basic jazz record, either. We twist up a couple of tunes."

At least it might bring him some more radio play. *Hope* fell through the cracks on that score, too jazz for the Kenny G stations, too modern for traditional jazz radio which has invested heavily in the Frank Morgan end of bebop of late. As Rick wryly remembers it, two stations wouldn't play it because it was "too good" for them.

## LISA FISCHER: SOUL SINGER

by Mark Sinker

SHE GIGGLES a lot, and kids around and crosses her eyes and talks in funny voices, still on the kick of her first publicity tour, not yet bored with the endless same-questions-every-city interview she'll be getting from now on. Then she tells me a story of her as a tot, finding some manuscript sheet-music in the street, taking it into school, claiming she'd written it, and when challenged, singing - making up tune and words - to prove it. This is obviously where she wants to be, after paying dues (and who does *that* any more?) backing up Billy Ocean, Dionne Warwick, Chaka Khan, Luther Vandross, Teddy Pendergrass. She's happy to be happy about it. Always she wanted to be a singer.

Lisa Fischer was born in Fort Greene, the Brooklyn neighbourhood Spike Lee came up in. Bad times in a hard world come into some stretches of her story, but her response was less fight than flight; the sound of her voice, an astonishingly agile four-octave light-gold abstract of an instrument, lifting off into the stratosphere, the further reaches of intimate softcore love and loss. "How Can I Ease The Pain?", her US chart hit, opens with intimate rhythm-pulse voice loops, her singing builds, drifts, dabs and then leaps into inexpressible emotional utopia, completely reshaping the song. If she can build on that...

But when we think of that American pop-soul diva zone, we don't think of a music where tough women are allowed control of their own lives and careers. From Aretha Franklin to Evelyn King, corporate choices, good and bad, get foisted on the most talented: the exceptions (Nona Hendryx, but who else?) have to accept, as price of their independence, a status that amounts to internal exile. In fact, as Fischer tells it, Vandross's persuasion helped her get her deal, and then touring with the Rolling Stones meant it was three years before this first record, *So Intense*, was actually finished, and no less than six producers on the various songs, including Atif Mardin, Narada Michael Walden and Vandross himself. She's cheerfully realistic about her freedom of movement, the limits imposed by what the record company expects of her.

Classically trained and disciplined (training - La Guardia School of Music and Arts; discipline - herself), she cut loose into local club work, to soften and shade all those forbidding operatic edges the way she wanted. But still she's spent the whole of her working life so far subverting her wilder self from the mix, focussing on the realisation of *someone else's* singing from someone else's time: early on she was a replacement Crystal, a replacement Marvellette, latterly in duet with Mick Jagger.



Lisa F by Jake Chessum

When I ask her at the outset what's the routine interview query that bores her most, she laughs and says she hasn't been interviewed enough yet to find out. As we wind up, she grins and actually thanks me for making her think, with my "unusual questions", and I wince inside, wishing they'd really been so unusual. Lisa Fischer is a far-from-routine talent, locked into an all-too-routine world. I don't think even she quite knows what she could do, or wants to do, with her voice: the problem is, I doubt if the industry does either.

## VANGELIS: KEYBOARDS

by Tom Corbin

IT'S A man's life on the Maas. On 18 June this year a group of intrepid biz-bodies ventured forth aboard a vulnerable-looking Rotterdam ferryboat to spectate at a late-night *soirée* at *Lumière* extravaganza featuring *Very Large*. Indeed on the boulevard by the river. This he did, dwarfed by some jolly cod-classical stage settings and observed by many thousands of happy citizens safely ensconced on the far bank, their view only occasionally obstructed by a shipload of merry Eurosuits.

Somewhere in the midst of all this, apparently, was Vangelis, doyen of bulldozer pomp-rock, commissioned by the European technosolidarity organisation Eureka to come along and do Something Very Large. Indeed on the boulevard by the river. This he did, dwarfed by some jolly cod-classical stage settings and observed by many thousands of happy citizens safely ensconced on the far bank, their view only occasionally obstructed by a shipload of merry Eurosuits.

Vangelis is the best kind of musical paradox. You find his records on the racks between Van Der Graaf Generator and Van Halen and there seems to be no shortage of them. If you include his joint

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ventures with the pixie-voiced Yespersion Jon Anderson they probably add up to about a score. They also seem to have evolved some sophisticated non-Darwinian survival mechanism whereby they outlast many a new, young, and ostensibly vital species of music, most of which fizz around for a while then disappear.

Vangelis makes music with a blatant disregard for fashion, which, strangely enough, is remarkably common. However, identifying the continuing appeal of the Vangelises (and the Yeses and Asias and Jean-Michel Jarres) of this world invites some interesting speculation. This is one of the few strands of vaguely popular Western music which is so far removed from the American jazz/blues/R&B tradition as to be practically divorced from it, not just in terms of presentation but also in terms of musical content. Checking the big V's vibe, it's easier to detect elements of renaissance music, the sacred choral tradition, the whooshy orchestrations of Sibelius, Debussy and Respighi and the melodic sense of Delibes (not to mention cheesy TV commercial tunes – but then, he does do a lot of soundtracks) than any of that goddamn rock'n'roll.

Should we be surprised? Well, Vang's thang is what it is. Maybe there's a whole crowd out there, and maybe most of them live in Europe, the Middle East and Japan, to whom American music essentially means zilch. OK, they may have all of Bruce Springsteen's albums, but they've grown up with their own traditions just as the Beis of their generation grew up with the hymns of Shaw and Parry and the TV themes of Ron Grainer. I'd guess that Vangelis's music, structured across global common denominators like Terry Riley imitating Mahler, is for them, if they want it.

Meanwhile, back on deck, the fireworks went zoom and the music went swish. Among the mainly-greatest mainly-hits which made up Vangelis's programme for the evening, we got the obligatory rendition of the *Chariots Of Fire* theme and a pleasing highlight when the aforementioned Anderson made an announced-on-the-grapevine-only appearance on stage to sing his half of the collaborative "Italian Song", which, to my mind, always was a well-crafted little number and which benefited no end from being sung across a river through what I'd been told was possibly the first million-watt PA system ever commissioned. There was a technostalgia highlight too, when an elegant steam engine charged at prodigious speed across a nearby bridge, all hisses and hoots. Although its sound, together with the sounds of the pyrotechnics, the water cannon, the helicopters and the occasional paddle steamer (sorry, didn't I mention them?) seemed to have an uncanny tendency to swamp the not dissimilar hisses and hoots of Vangelis's keyboards when the prevailing winds, er, prevailed.

Ultimately, though, there's pomp and there's pomp. Later that evening, at one of the most subdued post-gig parties you've never seen, most people seemed to be more or less exhausted. Only Vangelis, surrounded by family and friends, still seemed to have any energy left. Most of it, however, was focussed on a little video monitor tucked to one side of the room. He was watching the footage of the event, as if unable to believe even now that he could have been at the centre of so much sound, spectacle, attention and hard work. His big face was transfixed with a childlike joy.

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# The Blackwell Guide To Recorded Jazz

EDITED BY BARRY KERNFIELD

Blackwell, £17.95

## Jazz On CD: The Essential Guide

BY JOHN FORDHAM

Kyle Cathers, £9.99

BARRY KERNFIELD was editor of the 1988 *New Grove Dictionary Of Jazz*, given a hostile critical reception both here and in the US for its eccentric choices of entries and omissions and for its rather scanty coverage of contemporary jazz. But if his *Grove* was controversial, his *Blackwell Guide* is a spectacular fiasco. It is surely inexcusable for a book which claims to be a "balanced and comprehensive" guide to recorded jazz to have *no* entries whatsoever on records by (for example) Muihal Richard Abrams, Geri Allen, Albert Ayler, Billy Bang, Carla Bley, Paul Bley, Betty Carter, Steve Coleman, Marilyn Crispell, Eric Dolphy, Bill Frisell, Jan Garbarek, Tubby Hayes, Andrew Hill, Keith Jarrett, Steve Lacy, Wynton Marsalis, David Murray, George Russell, John Surman, Henry Threadgill, Mal Waldron, Mike Westbrook, Mary Lou Williams, Edward Vesala or John Zorn.

Frankly, inexcusable is an understatement. Even if we allow that this book is inadequate on modern jazz, inadequate on European jazz, inadequate on UK jazz and peevishly sexist to boot, it is still a deeply flawed book. The major problem is a format which allows most artists to be represented by only one recording – so each entry comprises an in-depth analysis of a particular record rather than offering any kind of biographical or artistic overview. Even when exceptions occur, the results are still absurd. Duke Ellington is given two entries in the "Big Bands" chapter, but there's still no entry at all on anything he did after 1942; Miles Davis gets four entries, but only one (*In A Silent Way*) from later than 1959 – which means the decade from 1959–69, during which many critics think he made several of his finest LPs, is completely ignored, as, of course, is everything he's done since 1969! Still, given that the book ignores pretty much everything that *anybody's* done since 1969, perhaps that's to be expected.

But comic exasperation aside, the book's treatment of modern jazz is utterly disgraceful.



"Here, remember me, my name is Albert Ayler." The great saxophonist laments his mysterious omission from the Blackwell Guide.

ful. In a total of nearly 450 pages of text, about 60 are given to the last 30 years of music – three decades summed up in two genre headings, "Free Jazz" and "Fusion", both of which are deemed to have more or less petered out by the mid-70s. In fact, I could find only *five words* in the entire book which were made later than 1975! Even the "Free Jazz" section is a nonsense, being a rag-bag chapter in which Ekkehard Jost is given the impossible task of covering practically everything that happened in the 1960s, from Ornette's proto-harmolodics to Coltrane's energy music to the Chicago structuralists to Charlie Haden's liberation music to the UK and European total improvisers (and still he misses out Albert Ayler – aargghh!! And Archie Shepp. And Bill Dixon. And Marion Brown. And Roswell Rudd. And . . . And . . . And . . .). And I just can't believe this book. It isn't a guide at all, it's a signpost to disaster.

I'm afraid my blowing off steam has left me precious little space to do justice to John Fordham's fine *Jazz On CD*, in its modest way a model of good sense, economical writing and wide-ranging critical acumen.

Like the *Blackwell Guide*, *Jazz On CD* is arranged chronologically, by genre, but here each artist listed is given a brief bio followed by succinct commentaries on between one to five or six selected recordings. Ironically, Fordham is especially strong on post-1970 jazz, to which he devotes nearly half the book, and rather skimpy on earlier eras; but I think it's less of a sin to represent the distant past by only its greatest moments than to pretend the present and recent past don't exist at all.

I spotted a couple of factual errors – *Africa Brava* was on Impulse! not Blue Note, Steve Lacy's first Novus record was *Momentary Not The Door*, etc, etc – and perhaps a hint of parochialism here and there – Andy Sheppard has four CDs listed, David Murray only two! But the book packs a good deal of information into a short space, covers a lot of ground very soundly and is still sufficiently up-to-the-minute to include entries on Tim Berne, Barbara Dennerlein, Ralph Moore, Pinski Zoo and Cassandra Wilson. Definitely the best guide to recorded jazz for aficionados, beginners and Barry Kernfeld alike.

GRAHAM LOCK

*There's no business like the International Music Show business.  
Tom Corbin reports*



THIS ISSUE will be going to press just as the **International Music Show** (Olympia, 10-14 July, public days 12-14 July) gets down to business. Here's a selection of who'll probably have shown what, what it might cost you (where known) and who to ring for info:

Roland (0252 816181) have once again exercised their talent for producing clean machines in the form of the new FP-8 portable digital piano. Compact, lightweight, uncluttered and elegantly designed in a choice of three colours, the FP-8 boasts a new keyboard hammer mechanism which produces a sensitive piano feel while avoiding the need for weights on each key. The instrument also incorporates a simple built-in sequencer, reverb and chorus, a range of presets covering piano, electric pianos, mallet instruments and strings and MIDI connections, all of which will set you back £1699.

Many companies maintain that certain of their instruments are equally happy at home or on the stage. In this case, it could well be true. The SB-55 Sound Brush and SC-55 Sound Canvas are respectively a sequencer and sound module each of which are unusually lightweight and compact. Unlike most MIDI gear, these two products have been devised with an emphasis on live performance rather than studio applications - for example, they're each of half-rack width and allow wireless remote control. At £468 for the SB-55 and £499 for the SC-55 these two units seem both reasonably priced and pretty useful. MIDI was originally conceived as a performance (rather than studio) facility, but it's an avenue which seems to be being explored less and less of late, so such innovations are welcome.

New wind instruments from **Rose Morris** (081 427 5377) include some new Conn trombones, one of which is an alto model. The same company distribute the range of Berg Larsen sax mouthpieces which has been extended to include a new 'Gold Series', featuring grained ebonite or hand-polished bronze models with gold-plated ligatures. Rose Morris also handle Mapex drums, demonstrated by everyone's favourite sardium-jazz steamhammer stomperson Billy Cobham, who collaborated in their design.

**John Hornby Skewes** (0532 865381) will hopefully be showing some Modulus graphite-necked guitars, having recently been appointed to this distributorship. They also handle the Jackson guitar range, most prominent in the hard rock sector, so it's good to see mention of the Jackson Soloist Archtop, fitted with active tone circuitry and supplied in various finishes with or without a twang bar; £1179 to £1279 should get you one. The archtop/semi-acoustic guitar always seems to be neglected in terms of new models, innovations etc,

so the foregoing is good news. Why not stick it through a Digirech GSP.21PRO guitar processor (£799) which features custom-written patches by the likes of Steve Lukather and Neil Schon?

There are also some bright ideas from the ever-clever Rhythm Tech Inc. (remember the crescent-shaped tambourine which found its way into the Museum of Modern Art?), in the form of the new Studio Series cowbells (from £15.25), a hi-tech bass drum beater with two beating surfaces and a sliding weight on the shaft to enable you to adjust the control response to your liking; all you'll need is £17.99.

However, the best idea of all is the Active Snare - a pre-tensioned snare system enclosed in an aluminium casing which simply replaces whatever snare you're currently using on your drum. The results, it seems, are a snappier, buzz-free snare sound, improved resonance, volume and sensitivity (as the snare strainer only needs to hold the carrier in place) and of course the snares are less vulnerable, although John Stevensish snare-strumming is a no-no. The unit, at £19.99, seems to be very good value, and as well as augmenting your favourite snare drum may well transform the sound of that rattly old dog you've been meaning to trade in for years, although that's a guess.

Anyway, space is limited, so these are just a few of the more interesting instrumental things which have been drawn to our attention by way of the IMS. And let's not forget *The Wire*, in the thick of it all and dispensing refreshing doses of Purdy's Elixir Vitae to our esteemed guests, courtesy of the sponsor of our Now's The Time section.



A MATTER of course: Salford College of Technology are running what looks to be a jam-packed intensive Music Technology & Sound Recording summer school from August 12 to August 16, covering technology, sequencing, editing, sound creation and manipulation, signal processing and effects, microphone techniques, multi-tracking and digital mastering. I think 'phew' is the word. Salford seems to be at the more progressive end of tertiary music education, offering degrees in such deeply immoral subjects as Popular Music and Recording and Band Membership, a diploma in Popular Music and the PBS John Lennon Awards. No doubt their prospectus yields satanic messages if read backwards. Course enquiries to Howard Wardle on 061 745 8324.

Another course subject: our recently-touted scholarship awards to the Musicians' Academy in London have been ever-so-slightly delayed for logistical reasons. Stay mellow, however; this scheme will be back on-line very soon.



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## Carter – the unstoppable music machine

Now in his eighth decade, Elliott Carter remains one of America's most active –

and innovative – composers.

He talks to Brian Morton about taste, rhythm and The Grateful Dead. Photo by Gino Sprio.

WHEN ROBERT Frost died in 1963, America's poets went into an immediate huddle. It was John Berryman put the issue at its simplest: Which one of us? Who's Number One now? There are no clear bloodlines in these matters, but there are often runnels of critical blood in the gutter. The atmosphere was something between a conclave of cardinals and a meeting of the Five Families, the puffs of white smoke sometimes reek of cordite.

The last year was marked by the deaths of Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland and, in a rather different inertial frame, Leonard Bernstein, a hefty cull of the A-list in American music. So who's Number One now? On simple grounds of seniority, it looks like a straight ballor between John Cage and Elliott Carter, neither man an obvious candidate for *capo di tutti capi*, but they sit – or seem to – at opposite poles of American music, like a Pope at Rome and a Pope at Avignon, masters of reason and unreason, American "innocence" against a song of experience sung to an apparently European tune.

Look a little closer, though, past all the distracting clutter and noise. Cage may have talked long of "anarchism", and the verbal chaos that yields up chance chords of a new harmony, but Cage knew what he was doing when he donned dead-bombers for a crown of laurels. He is, in Boulez's terse summation, "refreshing but not very bright". Carter, by contrast, is a publically understated figure who pleads "poor performing nerves", conservative in manner and mien, utterly unimpressed in that bloodletting year of 1963 by the cultural razzmatazz of the Kennedys (which held Robert Frost in such thrall from the chilly inaugural to the narrow place), with a personal manner placed somewhere between grandpaternal and patriarchal. A day younger than Messiaen, he was born under the same binary star.

Listen a little closer, and it is Carter who is the radical. "I know that line you're quoting. When I said that, as you understand, I didn't mean I intended to change the world. I meant a particular kind of attention or concentration in the detail and progress of the music." The quote, admittedly, came from a long time back – 1939, the year of his much-tampered-with *Canon Suite* for four saxophones – but it committed Carter to "perpetual revolt".

It's an honourable tradition, like Jefferson's "American mischief", but Carter less resembles one of those sniping backwoodsman content to drop a Redcoat every hour, backtracking constantly into the wilderness, than some frock-

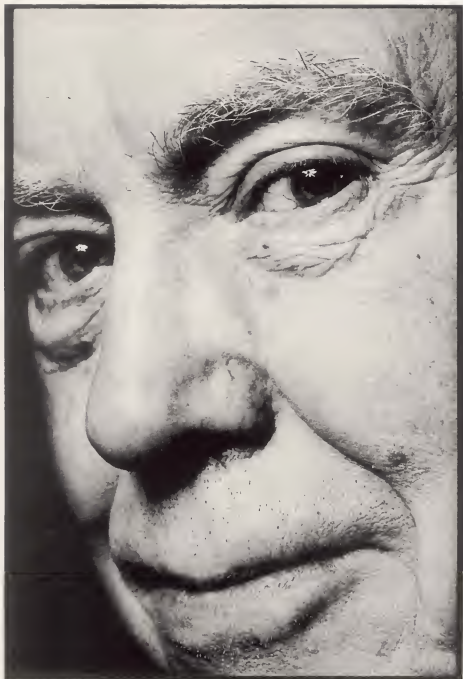
coated Federalist parsing and revising every ambiguity and loophole in the Constitution of modern music.

HE BEGAN, in American terms, at the beginning. At 16 he encountered Charles Ives, who encouraged his musical enthusiasms. "It isn't that Ives made me want to be a composer. I think I would have been anyway. But he gave that intention" – it's worth noting how often Carter 'intends' when the rest of us might just 'want': change the world, be a composer, etc, etc – "a specific focus. Other composers were very important to me as well: Bartók, Edgard Varèse, some of the late things by Scriabin, and of course with Nadia Boulanger, a lot of Stravinsky." Carter went the way of most young Americans of his generation and submitted (less utterly than most, one suspects) to the "gentle tyranny" of Boulanger's composition class.

His earlier music runs a complex but relatively unsurprising doctrinal course, moving from a relatively conservative diatonic harmony, through a contrapuntal richness that still opens up little freshets of Monteverdi in his mature work, a heavily mannered chromaticism, and a sort of rudely Americanized serialism, what we might call the "dirty dozens".

"Well, yes, jazz too was very important to me, to all my generation. It had a rhythmic freedom, and it represented to us certain other very important freedoms. People thought it was rather daring and shocking, but its iconoclasm was very like that of the great modernist composers; it opened up a vein of personal expression in the face of a culture that was breaking up and numbing a lot of the feelings that had gone to make great art in the past."

Carter's interest in rhythm – whether or not it came from jazz – has been one of the central characteristics of his work. The *String Quartet No 1* contains passages in which the fiddles play quite independent lines in relationships as bogglingly complex as 3 against 9 against 13 against 21 (in the fourth string quartet the pulse and metrics have become so complex that the players follow a click track on headphones) while the much later and quite un-Bartókian *Concerto For Orchestra* is marked by accelerations and decelerations in similar precisely framed contexts. These are aspects of what Carter called "metric modulation", a means of achieving his ideal of "focussed freedom" which combines elements of repetition with a local appearance of constant improvisation and a steely musical logic.



"I don't really appreciate a lot of totally free music. Not am I very impressed by so-called minimalist music. That seems to me to be it exactly. Minimal, very little in it." (On Glass, a later pupil, Nadia Boulanger was to agree.) Nor has Carter felt much attraction to electronics, though he makes a clear exception for his former pupil Tod Machover, lately the most interesting of IRCAM bursars. "So much of that kind of thing seems to be obsessed with volume. It's very loud, and like a lot of rock music, very oppressive. My generation would have regarded that sort of thing with very great suspicion. In the 30s, that's exactly what we were trying to combat, what was happening in Germany and Russia."

It's a nicely casual irony that Carter's London concert in March was sponsored by no less than the Grateful Dead. "Phil Lesh had heard the *Concerto For Orchestra* and really liked it and he wanted to put it on here through their foundation." Ask how he feels about *Aoxomoxos* and *American Beauty* and Carter adopts a rather faraway is-that-really-the-time? look, but he does make the point – one sitting up begging to be made – that there is a considerable irony in the distribution of resources in contemporary music.

"The louder it is, the more money there seems to be attached to it, and that's very disappointing, because it has very unfortunate connotations and there's something quite disturbing in a situation where a great many people are almost battered into listening to music that is really very crude and repetitive."

REPETITION, WHICH comes up several times, is the underlying counterpoint to everything Carter does. In Ewen's *American Composers*, published a decade ago, Carter described his method as "making things that go along, changing in very slight degrees, bit by bit. Or dealing with things that change abruptly." It may sound again like a receipt for *Music In Twelve Parts*, but for the typically barbed rider: "And making all this significant."

If much of Cage's endeavour is about the frustrated destruction of language by a not altogether articulate man, a kind of scuttering Billy Budd, Carter's is about the reconstruction of language. Verbal language plays a very important part in his music. About the *Concerto For Orchestra*, he referred to the "poetry of change"; the piece itself was inspired by some lines of Saint-John Perse, much as the fantastic trumpet solo in the 1976 *Symphony Of Three Orchestras* comes from the evocation of gull-cries over the Hudson in Hart Crane's "The Bridge", and Carter has found his texts in some equally recherche quarters. The early Robert Frost settings are, as befits the text, beguilingly simple. In years to come, though, they became more daring.

"The things I did by Cal [Robert Lowell, the troubled genius who was Berryman's immediate nominee as Number One], well, those were a kind of personal thing. We were friends, or I suppose I was a friend of his then wife's. He was a very disturbed man, very dark, but he had this remarkable vision and expressed it in remarkably simple terms."

In *Sleep. In Thunder* moves quite sharply away from the surprisingly naive, illustrative qualities of Carter's Elizabeth Bishop settings of 1975 (rationalised by the fact that this and the contemporaneous *Voyage* by Hart Crane were the first songs Carter had attempted in nearly 30 years, breaking his almost consistent emphasis on large, coherent structures), providing an incredibly intense sound-portrait of a man (Lowell appears as the "Dolphin", gliding with a sort of tortured grace from one element into another, squeakingly desperate to communicate across the divide) who moved between gently pastoral calm and a wildness that eventually destroyed him.

In between, Carter set some poems by the reigning Number One-brackets-Serious. John Ashbery stands in much the same attitude to Allen Ginsberg as Carter does to Cage. Ashbery called up, said he admired Carter's music and would like to collaborate.

"He writes very dense, very complex poems, but in a very straightforward, everyday, vernacular language. I really didn't understand them fully, certainly not at first, but I certainly responded to the language, and to the flattery! So I had the idea of setting them against fragments of Greek poetry – they're actually about Orpheus – in such a way the [baritone] singer, who is Orpheus, sings in a very passionate way behind a very cool [soprano] delivery of the poem; it's a device I found in Monteverdi" [in *La Combattimento di Clorinda e Tancrède*].

That layering of text and gloss, with all the ironies of language and comprehensibility, and the learnedness (Carter once taught Greek when his musical prospects were thinner) is near the heart of what Carter is about. The back-of-envelope reviewers have him down as "cerebral", but there is a fantastic intellectual energy in the multi-ensemble *Penthode*, premiered in London in 1985, the string quartets, now attractively boxed on Etcetera by the Arditti, the vocal pieces, even the very early *Muskrat* and *Pashamari* suites. And there is, underneath it all, a perpetual revolt against banality, against the casual colonisations of modern culture, against style.

"Am I a radical? Still a radical? Well, it isn't the sort of thing you're supposed to say when you get over 70 and then over 80, but I suppose I am."

#### selected discography

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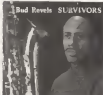
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# ZAPPA — *the works 1*

First of our two-part guide to the complete recorded works

of the freaked-out guitarist/composer

who still wants to kill Middle America.

By Mike Fish and Ben Watson.

Photo by Derek Ridgers

**FRANK VINCENT** Zappa was born on 21 December 1940 in Baltimore, Maryland. His parents were second-generation Sicilian Greeks and he grew up in California. His father moved a lot for work and he had a hard time at school. His gypsy good looks were not the American ideal, and he developed an outsider bitterness that led to an affinity for black R&B and a critical view of the American way.

Frank Zappa has not been served well by the rock press. Central to the 60s "underground" who sought to extend the scope of pop into art and politics, he is almost punished for surviving. It is so much more convenient to lionize dead heroes — Jim Morrison, Hendrix, Janis Joplin — than artists who are still productive. People who like music, though, are grateful that he is still there.

He learned rock music by collecting R&B records, something unusual for a white teenager before the advent of Elvis. He and Don Van Vliet, a high school friend (later to become Captain Beefheart), would listen to records together far into the night: Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, Guitar Slim, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown.

This was some education. Zappa's integrated high-school band The Black-Outs required defending from indignant racists after playing to a packed crowd in Sun Village, a mainly black area, in 1957. Like Johnny Otis, the West Coast drummer and 40s bandleader, Zappa's involvement with black culture meant that he could say (as he does on "Trouble Every Day" on *Frank On!*): "You know, people, I'm not black, but there's a whole lot of times I wish I could say I wasn't white", with an edge of honesty.

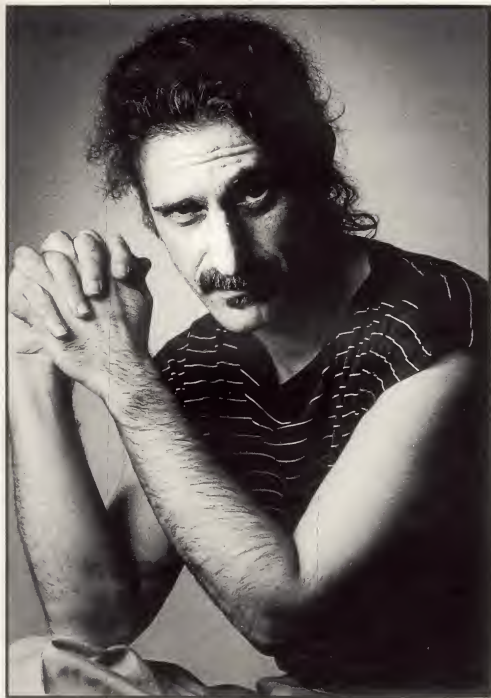
When the rock explosion of the 60s hit, both he and Beefheart were poised to create music that burned with subcultural riches. No wonder they thought San Francisco and its hippies were a bunch of fakes: when did Jefferson Airplane ever learn to play a stomping riff like "Metal Man Has Won

His Wings"? You would need to have known James Brown's "Top Of The Stack" to play that one!

Then Zappa heard a record that changed his life: Edgard Varese's *Ionisation*, a percussion/siren piece from 1931 that put Dada and Futurism into sound. It was being used as a demonstration record in a hi-fi shop (he had gone there looking for second-hand Joe Houston records). Zappa has subsequently broadened his interest in modern classical music, but his commitment to Varese's explosive yet rhythmically defined soundworld remains undimmed. Rock music gave Zappa the ideal environment in which to explore the new sonorities Varese dreamed of.

The Beatles and Stones and Bob Dylan arrived, making all sorts of people feel that pop music could become a new true culture. Zappa's background in marketing — he worked in an ad agency, designed greeting cards — enabled him to put together a band that turned current LA "freak" manifestations into a personal recording machine: the Mothers Of Invention. An exceptional rhythm section — Jimmy Carl Black and Billy Mundi on drums and Roy Estrada on bass — provided a ponderous, unstoppable beat that no one has since managed to emulate (unless it is Bill Laswell's Material). Zappa's guitar developed from razorsharp R&B stylings into gorgeous psychedelia via the wah-wah pedal (which he was onto before Hendrix).

The Mothers were interesting people. Don Preston came from Herbie Mann's band, had played with Carla and Paul Bley and Charlie Haden in the 50s. Ian Underwood played bebop with bassist Steve Swallow in college. Ray Collins was a veteran doo-wop vocalist. Percussionist Ruth Komanoff was a Juilliard graduate. Elliott Ingber was the R&B guitarist who became Winged Eel Fingerling. Jim Sherwood was a roadie who learned to play tenor on stage. Art Tripp was previously percussionist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. These Mothers were old and could play.



Unlike the English muso bands of the 70s who harked on such amazing facts (*Keith Emerson was classically trained!*) etc you have to dig around to find out these things. Zappa presented The Mothers as a circus, the apex of late 60s hairy anti-establishment Stop the War anarchy. People were disconcerted. Andre Previn said they were a con.

On "Little Green Rosetta" on *Joe's Garage* in 1979 Zappa sang "They're pretty good musicians! But it don't make no difference! If they're good musicians! Because anybody who would buy this record Doesn't give a fuck if there's good musicians! On it! Because this is a stupid song! AND THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT". Mass-marketed virtuosity has never been able to equal the appeal of inspired amateurism. This was a doo-wop truth punk rediscovered. Zappa has always known it.

Zappa's critical stock fell in the 70s when he recruited two ex-Turtles to give his band teen-appeal (they also sang background vocals for Marc Bolan). He came back with two superb jazz albums (*Waka/Jawaka* and *The Grand Wazoo* – see below) that were generally ignored, and then initiated the DiscReet label with the notorious "pornography" of "Dinah Moe Humm". Yet he was all the while running perhaps the most explosively creative jazz band in the rock arena.

Zappa's commercialism has a venom that many listeners find offensive. It is problematic. Songs like "The Illinois Enema Bandit" and "The Torture Never Stops" make the sexist offence of Guns N' Roses seem childish, almost benign. Zappa is interested in shock as part of his aesthetic schema. Zappa has no qualms about taste, and really the game has always been the documentation of his musicians' behaviour – we decide what to think.

The 70s and 80s have been a continuous stream of tours, recordings, interviews. To create art using the forefront of technology – always one of Zappa's obsessions – requires that the artist become a businessman. The on-the-road rock-arena perspective meant that punk, for example, meant nothing to him (though he did admit to liking the UK Subs' classic "Live In A Car"). Sometimes the work schedule and isolation seem to condemn him to an ivory console. John Peel called it "building dungeons in the sky". But then he arrives with some vast composition like *Drowning Witch* and everything seems worth it.

There are flashes of openness which – for a major composer in his 50s – are quite unusual. The new enthusiasm for Conlon Nancarrow, for example, or inviting Archie Shepp on stage. Wonder what he thinks of Giacinto Scelsi and Michael Finnissy?

Now that Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead has stood up to be counted as an enthusiast of modern classical music, Zappa no longer looks like a misfit and an outcast. Seems he was right all along. It is not weird to like Pee Wee Crayton and Pietre Boulez, Eric Dolphy and Elliott Carter – in fact it is common sense (and *Wre* philosophy, too). Zappa as patron saint of modern musical criticism?

Zappa is not going to hand the baton to John Zorn yet. His creativity is in full swing (witness the promised *Synclavier*

cornucopia, the free-improvisation of *Make A Jazz Noise Here*). Zappa has been invited, alongside Stockhausen and Cage, to attend Frankfurt's 1992 Music Festival. This is a mark of honour for the younger man, a composer who has done so much to break down barriers of class and race in exploring what sound can mean. About time people started listening. \*

BEN WATSON

### Rare Meat (1962-3)

A COLLECTION of pre-Mothers singles, absurdist versions of R&B that show Frank Zappa was a true connoisseur of doowop in all its primal weirdness. Two tunes feature Bob Guy, a local TV horror movie host. On "The World's Greatest Sinner" Zappa lets rip a guitar solo that rocks against the rhythm in a manner worthy of Johnny "Guitar" Watson: no other white bluesboy got this close. Pity the collection merely skims the surface of Zappa's juvenilia. BW

### Break Out! (1966)

ONE of the most bedazzling debuts in music (daddy-o). Two sides of pop tunes disfigured by guitar noise and general craziness, two sides of extended weird, culminating in the closing "The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet". The Mothers were essentially a quintet of FZ, Roy Estrada, Jimmy Carl Black, Elliott Ingber (later Winged Eel Fingering of The Magic Band) and doo-wop voice Ray Collins. Zappa's career-long interests are already manifest: blasted satire, political contempt ("Trouble Every Day"), Elvis ("Help, I'm A Rock"). Also, "I Ain't Got No Heart" is a melancholy autobiography. The sleeve lists scores of influences. Other sleeve-nots: "Sometimes he (Zappa) sings. Sometimes he talks to the audience. Sometimes there is trouble." MF

### Absolutely Free (1967)

THE FIRST side, despite such subsequent raves as "Call Any Vegetable", is a little too fragmented, but the second is Zappa's first conceptual masterpiece, culminating in the scathing assault on middle-America in "Brown Shoes Don't Make It". The horn section of Buzz Gardner and Motorhead Sherwood arrived, as did keyboard whiz Don Preston, but it's Zappa's songs which cut the mustard. The CD reissue includes two extra songs which weren't on the original LP, "Big Leg Emma" and "Why Don't You Do Me Right". MF

### We're Only In It For The Money (1967)

RELENTLESS, DARK, angry, this grim answer record to *Sgt Pepper* is Zappa's parting shot as a counterculture figure. It starts by poking fun at fake hippies, then stares at cops shooting kids and ends in a Californian version of Franz Kafka's *In The Penal Colony*. Some of the freewheeling energy of *Absolutely Free* is traded for structural detail, but the record remains a shocking experience. Zappa begins to unleash his toughest time signatures and charts, but the recording on the original is rather muzzy, and the controversial remix – substituting new bass and drum parts for those on the



damaged master tapes – will sound uncomfortable to anyone who knows the original. Now doubled with *Lumpy Gravy* on one CD.

MF

### Lumpy Gravy (1967)

NO SURPRISE that Zappa is currently planning a *Lumpy Gravy Phase II* (Money was "Phase I"). This record represents Zappa at his most outrageously creative, combining classical charts, bandmember mumbling and noises via a rape-slice technique that stands comparison to the work of Luc Ferrari (the king of European *musique concrète*). Because it only justifies itself via a keen sensitivity to contrasting timbre (whatever the sound source), this record has a purity that makes it a classic for Zappa addicts. When the later concerns – religion, alienated sex, exploitation, music-biz trivia – are mere history, maybe all the albums will sound like this. The Mozart of post-Capitalism states his case.

BW

### Cruising With Ruben & The Jets (1968)

ZAPPA'S TRIBUTE to the "cretin simplicity" of 50s street love songs. Recorded with the same primitive excitement with the multi-track as *Uncle Meat*, it is in fact a careful study of repetition and sonic levels. Minimalism that understood black music, this record looked forward to the knowing post-modernism of house. "Stuff Up The Cracks" is a suicide song (suffocation the social equivalent to the musical claustrophobia of endless piano triplers). Ray Collins sings so slimy it makes you cry. It's great. As with *Money*, new bass and drum parts on the CD change its impact.

BW

### Burnt Weeny Sandwich (1969)

A MORE successful instrumental set than *Uncle Meat*, perhaps, since The Mothers play as a band – the massive "Little House I Used To Live In" is prototype jazz-rock that ought to be boring but isn't, thanks to the suave energy of Preston, Sugarcane Harris and Zappa – and the briefer pieces on side one find the present-day composer flexing genuine muscle. What might be doo-wop outrakes from *Ruben And The Jets* open and close the record, with the lovely "Valerie" acting as Zappa's farewell to the rock'n'roll era. Currently unavailable

MF

### Uncle Meat (1969)

SORRY M I F, but no record is "more successful" than *Uncle Meat* (even *Burnt Weeny Sandwich*). This record set the agenda for art rock: everyone from the Soft Machine to the Hornweb Sax Quartet, Henry Cow to John Zorn, owe Zappa for this one. Multi-tracked Ian Underwood and Bunk Gardner substitute for horn sections in creating West Coast abstractions that put Stravinsky on a par with the Beach Boys. "Basically this is an instrumental album" runs the sleeve note, and "Pound For A Brown" and "Uncle Meat" are mighty compositions. The essential companion to *Trout Mask Replica*. (The CD contains 45 extra minutes – disappointingly not music, but dialogue from the *Uncle Meat* film).

BW



### Hot Rats (1969)

A HIT in England, this was "straight-ahead" music: driving instrumental rock with mesmerising, lopsided tunes and rich arrangements out of Rimsky Korsakov and Richard Strauss. Captain Beefheart sang, Sugarcane Harris played searing violin, Zappa played monster solos. The cascade of musical ideas made all subsequent jazz-rock sound impoverished. The CD re-issue adds back all sorts of embellishments vinyl could not cope with.

BW

### King Kong (1970)

ISSUED UNDER Jean Luc Ponty's name with liner notes by Leonard Feather, this is a Zappa album in all but name. Some of the tunes degenerate into pleasant jazz (Ernie Watts and George Duke in romping form) but "Music For Electric Violin and Low Budget Orchestra" is a 19-minute epic, riding on Buell Neidlinger's bass and Art Tripp's drums and the cream of Hollywood session staff (Donald Christlieb on bassoon, Gene Cipriano on oboe etc). Burlesque acoustic music with a sick sense of humour. Jean Luc Ponty's surreal violin never sounded better.

BW

### Weasels Ripped My Flesh (1970)

AN AMAZING cut-up that might have been a seminal influence on everyone from Coldcut to Zorn – if they'd only heard it! Essentially no more than offcuts and loose ends from Zappa's workbench of the previous three years, the music covers the most ludicrous and most serious aspects of The Mothers Of Invention, often in hair-raising juxtapositions. Side two of the original LP is as great as any Zappa music: a tribute to Eric Dolphy, studio squeaks and gargles, the punk classic "My Guitar Wants To Kill Your Mama", the irresistible "Oh No", a Glenn Miller-meets-Link Wray instrumental and the feedback gross-out of the title piece (recorded in Birmingham!) It rocks!

MF

### Chunga's Revenge (1970)

I HADN'T listened to this one for maybe ten years: it's an indulgent mess, even by some of Zappa's standards, but an entertaining one. There are chunks of heavyweight guitar on "Transylvania Boogie" and "The Nancy & Mary Music", which is a nonsense jam with great audience participation, "Road Ladies", a dull groupie song; skirling electric sax by Ian Underwood on the title track; fake 60s punk on "Tell Me You Love Me", and lots more. Forgotten gem: the three a.m.

jazzbo smooch instrumental "Twenty Small Cigars".

MF

## 200 Motels (1971)

MARKED AS the "soundtrack" to the film, this double album was actually an excuse to release orchestral Zappa music – played by the Royal Philharmonic under Elgar Howarth. Tony Palmer mixed the visuals, then denounced the entire project as "self-indulgence" in *The Sunday Times*. Film and rock reviewers also registered irritation. So the music got ignored and Zappa's wonderful atonal orchestrations fell on deaf ears: "self-indulgence" became the ubiquitous put-down for Zappa, as the post-68 rock critics joined with the record companies in bad-mouthing anything that did not suit radio formats. "Magic Fingers" delivered everything Led Zeppelin ought to have done; "A Nun Suit Painted On Some Old Boxes" definitively parodied post-Pierrot *Lynx*er vocalese. "Little Green Scratchy Sweaters and Corduroy Ponce" is sublime.

BW

## Fillmore East June '71 (1971)

NOT MUCH fun, and it sounds as if Zappa knows it. Having drafted Flo and Eddie (Howard Volman and Mark Kaylan) into the Mothers full-time, he made them the linchpin of this distended suite of rock-star-meets-groupie songs. It was mildly amusing 20 years ago, and it's quaint and tedious today. Even the other Mothers sound sloppy here, although there are knockabout bits of "Peaches En Regalia" and Don Preston gets to do an encore on moog synthesizer.

MF

## Just Another Band From LA (1972)

THE INTOLERABLY laboured and tedious "Billy The Mountain" skit represents the nadir of FZ's work at this period, a collection of music-hiz in-jokes grafted on to a mini-operetta. But "Magdalena", on the second side, is actually quite funny, and BW insists that the record is worth having for Zappa's snorting guitar improvisation on a revised "Call Any Vegetable". Well, maybe it is. Final appearance by Flo and Eddie with the group, fortunately.

MF

## Waka/Jawaka (1972)

MADE, ALONG with *The Grand Wazoo*, following Zappa being injured at a London concert, this is a neglected and very fine record. Robert Christgau's opinion that it was made after Zappa had been listening to a lot of Miles Davis seems to be based on the presence of a trumpeter, Sal Marquez, in the band. It's a crisp, gleaming rock-jazz, decked out with strong modal solos (Zappa, Marquez, Preston) and horn charts which map out FZ's labyrinthine melodies and make them sound gleefully easy. Plus a couple of oddball songs, one of which features Sneaky Pete Kleinow on pedal steel. Great studio sound.

MF

## The Grand Wazoo (1972)

A COMPANION piece to the above, almost all-instrumental, and delivered by a full West Coast big band. If



Shorty Rogers had breakfasted with Uncle Meat, this is what it would sound like (and the sleeve notes continue the Uncle Meat mythology). Some of the playing is so cool it anticipates 80s lite-jazz, but the long title track is a kind of rock-swing that nobody else, Zappa included, has much looked into since. George Duke appears; Don Preston is still on hand; the bassist is someone named Erroneous. Zappa directed from his wheelchair. Later, he confessed to little regard for the two records: "They were hits in Scandinavia".

MF

## Overnite Sensation (1973)

THE REFORMED Mothers included Ian and Ruth Underwood, Tom and Bruce Fowler, George Duke and Jean-Luc Ponty – a team of virtuosos and a remarkable playing band, which gets to show off its chops on full-tilt showpieces like "Fifty-Fifty" and "Dirty Love". But Zappa filled the record with his most scabrous pornographic lyrics, and what you hear is a brutal contempt for sex, which takes the energy out of the playing too. Duke gets off some crazy stuff and FZ is spirited, but this is the point where his music starts to sound as cold and heartless as his detractors suggest.

MF

## Apostrophe (') (1974)

MIX+ IS not the only Zappa fan to register reservations after *Overnite Sensation*. It irritated a new label, DiscReet, and an overtly commercial blatancy. However, unprejudiced by an underground-rock Mothers-fan perspective (how old were you in 1968?), viewed in its own terms, *Apostrophe (')* is stunning. A mercilessly supercilious Zappa (people were calling him "Uncle Frank") takes us on a trip to the North Pole via religion-baiting and poodle-discipline. The title track (the only one without words, of course) was a jam with Jack Bruce and Jim Gordon. Fido was Plato's Phaedo, and the words – dismissed as "trivial" by the reviewers – actually concern mortality, materialism and masturbation. Heady stuff to reach number ten in the *Billboard* chart (June 1974).

BW

## Roxy And Elsewhere (1974)

A QUICKIE double-live set which manages to capture some of the tremendous gusto of this edition of The Mothers, jazz chops and little-big-band attack coupled with rock drive. Frank's skit on B-movie horrors, "Cheepnis", is priceless, there's a monolithic revision of *Frank On's* "More Trouble Every Day", and "Be-Bop Tango (Of The Old Jazzmen's



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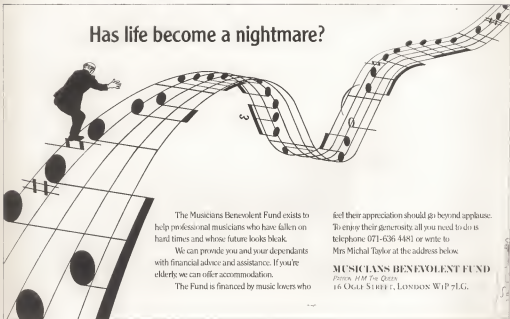
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Church)" brought forth Zappa's immortal line, "Jazz is not dead, it just smells funny!" Napoleon Murphy Brock replaces Ian Underwood on sax and is an inspired new straight-man foil for the leader. Beautifully crisp and crunchy sound. MF

### One Size Fits All (1975)

HIGHLY RATED by Zappaphiles and ignored by everyone else, this skintight sequence of songs in sumptuously hi-fi sound spotlights lots of fancy playing, sewn right into the fabric of the tunes, which give up on mere scatology and extend Zappa's private mythology to new extremes of obscurity. "Inca Roads" seems to be a poke at Eric Von Daniken, "Can't Afford No Shoes" blasts Nixon's recession, and Johnny "Guitar" Watson inexplicably gets two walk-on parts as guest vocalist. The Mothers sounded to be moving towards a hyper-slick jazz-rock, though all jazz-rock was getting hyper-slick in 1975. MF

### Bongo Fury (1975)

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART had appeared on the last one as 'Bloodshot Rollin' Red'. Here he was a front-line partner, though his appearances were mainly as Zappa's stooge, mumbling lyrics that scarcely added to the poetic treasury he'd already fostered. Cut mostly live in Texas, the music rocks — "Advance Romance" is a wild blues fantasy and "Muffin Man" shows off Zappa's guitar prowess — but the material is rather tired and shoeless: "200 Years Old" is about as weak a snook at the American bicentennial as you could imagine. The last album with 'Mothers' on the masthead, and the last with the old crew of George Duke, Napoleon Brock and the Fowlers

### Zoot Allures (1976)

A NEW chapter. The major player, besides FZ, is drummer Terry Bozzio, whose skillful playing is remote from jazz time: Zappa was getting back to rock. A neat, curt set of songs gives nobody much to bite on, with softcore porn, winos, disco boys and dead-end jobs the subject matter. "The Torture Never Stops" is ten minutes of orgasmic groaning and Vincent Price-monologue from the composer. Not bad, but the point remains that this period of Zappa's work seems much more dated than his 60s records, as time-locked as they are. MF

### Zappa In New York (1977)

LIKE ALL Zappa's double LPs, an album of vast musical and conceptual proportions. The word is opera. "Titties 'n Beer" reworks Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* into B-movie cameos and verbal improvisation. The "Black Page" gave hapless individuals (including this author — Hammersmith Odeon 1979) the chance to dance onstage to rhythms of a complexity unsurpassed outside Brian Ferryhough. "The Purple Lagoon" had the Brecker Brothers playing as if their lives depended on it. Some buyers got "Punky's Whips" (others did not). Hopefully the CD release will have it, as it achieves live world/sound surprise that was previously a tapeslice feature. WW



### Studio Tan (1978)

THE NEXT three releases deserve explanation. Originally there was *Lather*, a four-record set that mixed live rock, tapespliced *musique concrete*, orchestral music and jazz into a two-and-a-half-hour blockbuster. Warner Bros would not release it. There were lawsuits. Zappa salvaged the live rock as *Zappa In New York*: Warners released the rest with covers by Gary Panter (of *Raw Comix* fame) and no personnel details. This has "Redunzl" with some great Zappa guitar and George Duke keyboards; "Let Me Take You To The Beach", sublime idiot pop; "Greggory Peccary", a cartoonscore that predates the current interest in Carl Stalling by over a decade. WW

### Sleep Dirt (1979)

"FILTHY HABITS" perpetuates the lascivious feed-back of *Zoot Allures*. "Flam Bay" dissects cocktail jazz in the manner of "Twenty Small Cigars" on *Chunga's Revenge*. Intimate chamber jazz bass interacts with arena rock guitar and scored drum patterns. Some of the oddest music ever recorded, in fact. If you like interesting music, start here. WW

### Orchestral Favourites (1979)

THERE HAVE been criticisms of Zappa's orchestral works by those who appreciate the avantgarde tendencies of his rock output: he is not challenging the composers he admires — Edgar Varese, Krystof Penderecki, Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter — with the music here. However, the instrumental burlesques and surreal takes on Western-movie pomposity are infused by a sharp ear for colour, and a sense of humour that is quite unique. This album is buoyed by electric bass and non-classical drumming (and a guitar solo on "Duke Of Prunes"), so it has a punch the later LSO albums lack. WW

### Sheikh Yerbouti (1979)

ZAPPA'S APPARENT taste for hiring musicians who could simply play all his notes, rather than act as creative foils, tells against this double-LP. It's a series of nasty, tasteless attacks on John Doe which are no different to what was usually going on in 'punk' at the time, except for one thing: there is ice in Zappa's heart. Which makes the otherwise almost hilarious "Bobby Brown" into something sarcastically horrible. Plus: "Baby Snakes", the near-hit "Dancin' Fool", the monumental guitar solo on "Yo' Mama". MF

Next month: the works up-to-date, plus Zappa's most outrageous quotes!

## Blowing out of hand

David Sanborn — *is he or isn't he?*

Richard Cook *is on the spot*

*as the wild man of funk-pop goes (almost) straight-ahead!*

"THE J-WORD? God forbid!"

David Sanborn is serious about this. Even if his new record, the splendid *Another Hand* (Elektra), is as close to a straight-ahead session as the alto saxophonist has ever done, he's still not claiming jazz status.

"I never use that word in connection with me. I don't think it's accurate in describing my playing. I don't really have a strong command of the vocabulary and I don't come out of the tradition. Other players are more adept in the idiom."

"There's so much confusion about what jazz is now," he muses. "You get people saying, oh, I like Kenny G or whoever. What that does is mislead people about what jazz really is. It comes out of a tradition and a certain kind of attitude about pushing the boundaries melodically, rhythmically and harmonically, the way pop music doesn't. It's developed a language and a momentum that is unmistakable."

"It's always been a marginal music, so it's important to make that distinction, to keep it alive. An original art form that needs to be looked after."

David's overview comes from a musician well-placed to monitor as well as participate in the music. He's always performed at a tangent to the main current of jazz — rock gigs with Paul Butterfield and David Bowie, soul stuff, countless sessionman dues, signature solos with Gil Evans, and his own crop of melodic, tight, funk-directed albums — yet he's been as closely-associated with a jazzman's methodology as anyone working on the fringes of the (shem) hardcore music. That high, clenched sound is as personal as any great saxophone tone, and the fluency of his gifts as an improviser is made clear by the playing on *Another Hand*, a record which several colleagues have already expressed a mild astonishment over. Setting Sanborn up with such glitterati as Bill Frisell, Charlie Haden, Jack DeJohnette and Marc Ribot would seem like buying in credibility, if it weren't for the leader's authority. In

this music of wider spaces, sensuous rhythms and tracks where the next beat isn't always forcing your hand, the saxophonist stretches and uncoils his phrases with complete assurance.

"To me," he says, "it's not so out of the ordinary. It'll be perceived that way, because my albums have been in the R&B, funk-pop kind of area, but the context here is different. And I react differently as a player. Essentially I'm the same person. I just wanted to pull myself out of that electric context for a minute."

Most of the set is produced by Hal Willner, he of the cover-version albums of Monk, Disney and other tunes, although two tracks were helmed by Marcus Miller. It looks as though the latter might have strayed in from a different session.

"Well, I included them because they made a good balance. You never know what shape an album is going to have. I did those tunes first and they're at the end of each side on the cassette."

The film material — a piece from George Dunning's *The Devil At Four O'Clock* score, and a filler of Bernard Herrmann — was Willner's idea, and a smart one: the resulting medley is the most ambitious and unusual music on the record, arranged by Greg Cohen as an impressionist counterpart to Zorn's abstract treatments of similar music.

"In a certain sense, we did everything live in the studio. Putting the music on tape was easy. There was a lot of pre-production work, we rehearsed for a week, but recording the album was straightforward. Several of the tunes were one take. If you have to do something ten or 12 times, it gets a little old."

A WAY FROM recording, Sanborn's had mixed visibility of late. His *Night Music* show on cable TV was axed at the last minute, following two seasons where one could tune in and





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expect to see Sun Ra, Miles Davis or whoever turning up as if they were just another guest star.

"They dropped a bomb on us at the last minute," he says, ruefully. "It often happens that way. We had the season planned and the guests booked, ready for September, and in August the sponsor decided not to renew. They wanted more viewers to justify the spending.

"I think we did something that was worthwhile. I'd rather go down being proud of what we did. I did it for very selfish reasons, really – to be able to turn on my TV and see Fontella Bass or Sonny Rollins or Hank Crawford."

How does he see the ever-rising tide of young neo-con players, the flood of youthful maestros following in the Marsalis footsteps, potential masters all, yet not quite innovation's heralds?

"It's kind of like being in school. It's grounding young players in the tradition. Bach was grounded in the tradition. So was Charlie Parker. They developed a language that was new. They're doing research and understanding what went before them. It remains to be seen how they'll grow and expand the idiom. Someone like Terence Blanchard, not only as a player but also as a writer, is taking real steps forward.

"There's a rivalry between these players, but it's a good thing. Back in the 30s and 40s you'd have ten or 12 players

lining up to have a contest. That's not a bad thing."

But it has led to a glut of product. With all these players growing up in public, plus the countless reissues and works by older masters filling out the continuum, aren't listeners overwhelmed?

"It's an embarrassment of riches! Look at the other side of it – so much great music, I can't keep up! Think back ten years, when there were so few players coming up. I think it'll all level up in the end."

SANBORN HIMSELF is already there, comfortable, settled enough to take the kind of chance which *Another Hand* affords. There's one point which can't be resisted, though. July's *Down Beat* carried a Blindfold Test with the saxophonist where he identified Christopher Hollyday as Phil Woods, without question. Aren't people going to rag on him for that?

"Aw no! I hate those Blindfold Test things! What happened was, I thought I recognised Phil immediately, and then we just talked over the rest of the track. Then he told me it was Christopher Hollyday! I couldn't fuckin' believe it! I mean, he sounded *exactly* like Phil! Oh man, as soon as he sees that, Phil's gonna be on the phone and saying, you dirty mother-fucker . . ."

win!

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## Hammonds are a girl's best friend

Germany's Barbara Dennerlein is carving out a reputation as today's leading jazz organist —

but there's only one instrument that she'll play.

Brian Morton talks turkey with a Hammond egghead.

Photo by Xavier Young

"I'M VERY interested in artificial things. I'm interested in beauty that is artificial."

Barbara Dennerlein is a remarkable instance of self-creation. Beyond the lucky happenstance that inspired doting parents to give her an electric organ for her 12th birthday, she admits of nothing as banal as an influence. "I had a teacher for a time, just one teacher, but very soon he had taught me all he knew, and it wasn't the way I wanted to play. What was really important was that he owned a Hammond B-3, which I thought was just a fantastic instrument. That was what I wanted."

And eventually got. Dennerlein's single-minded dedication to the Hammond and polite refusal of the importuning Prophets, DX7s and Synclavers looks a little like a May-December match, but for the fact that Dennerlein's repertoire has branched ever outward from her initial commitment to swing and now embraces a bewilderingly personal synthesis of styles, from bebop to the freeish charts carved out with trombone hobo Ray Anderson on the misleadingly-titled *Straight Ahead*. There is a second Enja album called *Hot Stuff!* (Dennerlein is disinclined to feminist rhetoric) and a couple of things on her own label. Her reputation has grown fast outside her native Germany, and her dance card is currently full, 210 dates last year, a similar number this.

But, with all those high-tech keyboards busting with polyphonic hormones, why the Hammond? Dennerlein strips the bachelors bare.

"These modern keyboards, computers, synthesizers have no personality. The Hammond is a very warm, very human, very personal instrument. You can do what you want with it. I'm playing at an open air concert in Canada soon; it sounds wonderful in the open air. People misunderstood something: when I played synthesizers on *Hot Stuff!*, I didn't move from one instrument to another. I have a MIDI system built which allows me to play synthesizers on the Hammond keyboard. It is my *only* instrument."

Undying love. Unwilling to consign it to air-freight or some Yorke-munching psychopath in a rig, she schlepped it across Europe herself. Playing on a borrowed instrument makes her very nervous.

What about other organ players? Shirley Scott's name draws a slightly blank look and there's no take-up either on Alice Coltrane who, I ventured to suggest, was a much more

interesting organist than piano player. As to "Cheemy Smeet", "he is the organ player everybody has heard about, and people sometimes write that I am influenced by him, but only because they can't think of anyone else."

So I mention that too many moons ago, but only four or five doors down in Camden, I heard the late, great Khalid Yasin (Larry Young, as was) in Lifetime, easily the most innovative of the early jazzrock bands.

"Larry Young was a brilliant player, so powerful, and Tony Williams, he is brilliant, too. Drummers are terribly important to me. Because I change my playing so much, I need to find lots of different drummers, or else one who can play in all different ways, fast, hard, soft, slow."

ALL OF this is summoning up analogies which are entirely unworthy of me or of *The Wire*, so back to the Hammond, which occupies a psychic file filled with nothing more lascivious than Reg Dixon and the old Bijou in Sauchiehall Street.

"Yes, people don't really know very much about the instrument. I don't think people know very much about musical instruments at all, but certainly not the Hammond. Someone once asked me where the bassist was that they could hear, and couldn't understand about the pedals. That's why I like to talk to my audiences about the instrument, and I include that in the set."

There's something engagingly deliberate about Barbara Dennerlein's whole self-possession: the retro musical tastes, the unwillingness to concede influences paired with the confidence to lecture the glass-clinking classes, the careful dissonant lime and burgundy power-dressing, make-up that looks as if it was applied by John Singer Sargent, the "very styled" flat back home in Germany (where she prefers to remain, close to her parents).

Much is currently made of the semiotics of gender in popular culture: Madonna's belly-button, Annie Lennox's Dietrich ambiguity, even Wendy James's ambitious tantrums; but how do you locate this willowy job with her remarkable self-determined style and her emphatic consort? On the stand the old guy sounds like he's had an armful of monkey glands. Musically, it's all the more fascinating because it seems so patently improbable. Dennerlein knows where she's bound. And she knows when she's free as well.



The Music: Bob Stewart

Each month we test a musician with a series of records which they're asked to comment on and "mark out of five" – with no prior knowledge of what it is they're hearing! This month: Bob Stewart takes the test with Philip Watson.

JAZZ MAY have many instrumental backwaters, but Bob Stewart has done more than most to bring the tuba back firmly into the mainstream. A trumpet player at college, Stewart was inspired and encouraged on the more cumbersome horn by Howard Johnson, and on moving to New York in 1968 he joined Substructure, Johnson's tuba ensemble. Since then, playing an impressive range of styles (from Dixieland to bebop and freeform) in an even more remarkable range of bands, Stewart has helped redevelop and redefine the role of the tuba in contemporary jazz.

He has appeared in big bands led by Mingus, Gil Evans, Carla Bley, Dizzy Gillespie, David Murray and Taj Mahal, worked in small groups with Arthur Blythe, Bill Frisell and Lester Bowie (in Brass Fantasy), and frontlined a quartet with French horn player John Clark. Stewart's own quintet have recorded two much lauded albums on JMT (*First Love and Gun Home*), and he is currently working on arrangements of such Mingus compositions as "Fables Of Faubus" and "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" for an octet he premieres this month at the Saalfelden Festival in Austria.

Ever open-minded, Stewart dismisses any notion of the tuba being a limited instrument. "Even though I favour using the tuba as a bass instrument, I can play solos, melodies, and all kinds of bass lines. And there are so many sources to choose from – every culture has some kind of tuba tradition – from English colliery bands to the brass bands of Germany and Austria, and its use in the music of Africa, Cuba, Surinam, and of course, New Orleans. The tuba is truly a world instrument."

#### HOWARD JOHNSON

"Third World Anthem" from *Album Album* by Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition (ECM). Johnson (tba); David Murray (tr), John Purcell (as), Rufus Reid (b); Jack DeJohnette (d)

(Straightaway) Howard Johnson. Jack DeJohnette. *Album Album*. Nice album; fantastic album. Howard isn't just a master tuba player, he's a master musician. Howard was the person who opened my eyes and mind to the fact that there's a lot more available to the tuba than was being offered. He's the greatest influence on my musical career because he encouraged me to find out who I wanted to be on tuba and how I wanted to represent myself through the instrument. What this track shows is that there are as many sides and styles of playing the tuba as there are to the trumpet or saxophone. Howard presents the tuba as a horn player out the front of the band. It's unbelievable the things that he does on tuba – his upper registers are equivalent to the flexibility and skill of, say, Cat Anderson on trumpet.

Mark it out of five!

Seven

#### CYRUS ST CLAIR

"You'll Long For Me (When The Cold Winds Blow)" from *Cherokee Willows's Jazz Kings* (VJM). Ed Allen (c), Charlie Ivis (tb); Albert Socaris (cl), Williams (p); Leroy Harris (b); St Clair (tba).

No kidding. No kidding. Is this The Tuba Players' Band? No? Well the tuba is very prominent in the recording for this period. Is it early King Oliver?

It was actually recorded in 1927, and it's Cyrus St Clair.

It didn't sound that late. And I don't even know who that is. Wow, that's very interesting. This was about the time, or in fact a little earlier, that the tuba started to be replaced by the bass. Milt Hanton was telling me recently that, when a lot of blacks moved from the south to Chicago in the late teens, the tuba began to fade out because it came from a country marching tradition and it wasn't really considered hip enough for the urban clubs. It was actually style reasons rather than the tuba being difficult to play physically that led to its decline. I thought it was a fantastic track. I've listened to all the Smithsonian reissues of things like The Hot Fives and King Oliver and never have I heard so prominent a tuba solo. My beginnings were in Dixieland – that's one of the reasons I recorded "Sweet Georgia Brown" on my last album – and I can't deny the instrument's

roots. I imagine, for its time, this was pretty avant-garde. Five

#### PHILIP FRAZIER

"Kidd Jordan's Second Line" from *Rebirth Kick It Live! (Special Delivery)* Frazier (tba) with The Rebirth Brass Band.

This is either The Dirty Dozen Brass Band or Rebirth. It sounds like The Dirty Dozen because they have a lead trumpet player who can hit high notes like that...

It's Rebirth

The first time I saw them was in the lobby of the North Sea Festival. That totally turned me on, I mean, there was plenty to see, but I couldn't get past that lobby. I was dancing, it was fantastic. They seemed to have a rawness to them whereas The Dirty Dozen had become a little smoother, with a little more finesse.

This track is called "Kidd Jordan's Second Line." What's the significance of that?

Well, it literally refers to the second line of the marching bands where the drums and the tuba player were situated. The front line is the horns. I call my band First Line because I don't want to be second. Philip Frazier's playing is very effective on this track – if you're doing more, and playing a lot of notes, you're not respecting that tradition. He keeps it solid, just enough to push the band. Five, on spirit alone.

#### BILL BARBER

"Boplicity" from *The Birth Of The Cool* (Capitol) Barber (tba) with the Miles Davis Nonet

It feels like early 50s, maybe Gil Evans, maybe *The Birth Of The Cool*. So it's Bill Barber. Yeah, that has Gil's colour on it. Bill Barber and Don Butterfield were on a lot of these early Gil Evans arrangements and this was the beginnings of the rebirth of the tuba in contemporary jazz. I think I worried Gil into letting me into his band, I was so determined I remember taking a tape of what I was doing with John Clark to Gil, and the very compliment I had been receiving from other people and taken great pride in, like "Yeah Bob, that's great man, it sounds just like a bass", Gil said but with a slightly different emphasis. He said "Yeah Bob, that's nice, but it just sounds like a bass." I thought about that and I realised there was a



Horn carlin! Bob Stewart photo by Douglas Cape.

whole personal instrument there to find out about. Five for Bill Barber for being part of the roots of a new beginning for the instrument.

#### PAUL RUTHERFORD

"Chefor" from *Neuph* (Sweet Folk And Country) Rutherford (eu).

It almost sounds like a French horn because this is not a tuba, it's a euphonium. Where's the player from? Russia? Germany? Poland? He's English.

Oh, it's Paul Rutherford. Yeah, I have this, last time I saw him, he gave me this record. Rutherford's a fine musician. To sustain an abstract solo piece like this for over eight minutes, when you're dealing with difficult multiple techniques from multiphonics to skipping registers – everything your teacher told you not to do in fact – he gets a five

#### RAY DRAPER

"Essi's Dance" from *Tuba Jazz* (Jubilee) Draper (tba); John Coltrane (ts); John Maher (p); Spanky DeBrest (b); Larry Rutchie (d).

(*Straightaway*) Ray Draper with Coltrane. Ray knew how to choose notes and intervals on tuba that evoked colours in your mind. It wasn't that he was such a fantastic tuba player technically – as a matter of fact, Ray told me one time that the first time he heard Howard it made him want to give up the tuba – but what he did know was how to place notes with the rhythm section so that it really swung. It's totally different to Howard's soloing, but equally valid. Ray, along with such players as Red Callender and Slam Stewart, kept the tuba alive in the 50s, so that's a five.

#### EARL MCINTYRE

"Reactionary Tango (In Three Parts)" from

*Social Studies* by Carla Bley (Watt). McIntyre (tba); Joe Daley (eu), with The Carla Bley Band.

(*Straightaway*) Carla Bley. I knew it was her after the first two measures. It's from *Social Studies* with Earl McIntyre on tuba and Joe Daley on euphonium. Carla's very dramatic, very theatrical; it sounds like it could be from *The Turn of Mind* or something. Yeah, listen there, that's interesting orchestration – she uses two bass horn instruments to accompany the electric bass solo. This was right after I left the band. It was around that time that I started working with Arthur Blythe, and I had to turn her down a couple of times, and bandleaders get a little sensitive about that. But the important part is that the tuba lived on in the band. Both of them were in the tuba and brass section with Howard and myself in Taj Mahal's band, Earl was 17, Joe was 21. Carla has a beautiful melodic sense, especially for the tuba – my ensemble parts always had lovely melodies. So five for Earl and five for Carla's orchestration.

#### DON BUTTERFIELD

"Solo Dancer" from *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* by Charlie Mingus (Impulse). Butterfield (tbeb, tba) with the "Charles Mingus New Folk Band"

Is there a tuba in there? No, well those blasts sound like bass or even contrabass trombone. It feels like Mingus. That colour, that coda right there is Mingus. Is it Don Butterfield?

Yes, and according to Mingus's inner notes, he's playing two tubas with one mouthpiece.

Mingus liked to lie, Mingus liked to tell stories. I got to be friendly with Mingus because I broke up a fight once between his trumpet player and road manager over some bread that was owing. That kind of show of force was the sort of thing that impressed Mingus, and after that he was just so nice to me, and I hired musicians for gigs for him. Mingus was a master composer – the more I study him, the more I appreciate that – and his musical ability far overshadowed his bass playing. Don Butterfield also did some front line recordings with Clark Terry, and he was part of the reintroduction of the tuba back into jazz in the early 50s. So five again for that

Miles called him "the Duke Ellington of the 80s".

the Sun thought him "too dangerous" for their readers.

As the world awaits the new Prince record *Diamonds And Pearls*,

Andrew Pothecar reflects on the years of the Purple Reign.

Prince's powers as a handloader

and his strange relationships with Batman and God

## HIS MAJESTY LOVESEXY

"That funky little dude" — Miles Davis on Prince

THE FIRST time I saw Prince I saw the face of God.

I'm not talking about the musical frissons of seeing a good band, like dodging the trombonist's slide at a packed and jumping performance of the Geri Allen octet, or leaning against a literally vibrating wall as Ronald Shannon Jackson drums up a storm of ancestors at the Knitting Factory, or just enjoying being taken to the upper atmosphere with Sun Ra and his merry men singing "Let's Go Fly A Kite" at the Mean Fiddler.

No. This was on the 1986 Parade tour and I was between audience and stage awaiting the 15 minutes that photographers would have to take pictures. A blackout curtain covered the stage and I slipped under to watch as roadies, in calm contrast to the restless noise of the arena-sized audience behind me, made finishing connections on the black-and-white checked stage. Asked just before the start of the show to return to the other side of the curtain, I ducked back under to wait for the first, loud, flared notes to sound from "Around The World In A Day".

After about a minute of music and cheering the curtain

opened to a dance beat and there was Prince, dancing on the spot — running, actually — and projecting enough energy to reach 10,000 people. At about 20 feet away I was dead in its path. It literally knocked me back a step. He was doing what he does best: he was enjoying it; he was good at it; he was ready for it. I wasn't.

Recovering, I tried to keep up for 15 minutes as he ran from stage-side to stage-side, instrument to instrument, dance step to dance step with the energy and precision of a champion gymnast, including in his spot-on timing the occasional indulgent mug for the cameras.

After we were politely hustled out we were told we could remain in the auditorium. But I left for home, finding that from halfway back he looked disappointingly small and that the energy of a mass of other worshippers didn't match the proximity to a beatific smile.

"Am I black or white/Am I straight or gay" — "Controversy"

IN THE beginning was the Word, and the Word was Lovesexy . . . alright, enough of the biblical approach. And anyway, Prince's beginning is deliberately obscured through



*Photo by Andrew Posthery*

the soft-focus of 'semi-autobiographical' B-movie slush and half-lies in early interviews (before the interviews stopped completely).

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## Wire T-shirt offer!



Every year, **The Wire** produces one of its limited-edition T-shirts.

Every year, they sell out.

This year... we expect to be no exception.

Once again, we've produced what we think is the smartest, coolest T-shirt for the summer ahead. We've chosen only the finest quality – 100% heavy-duty cotton, not the flimsy, easily-shrunk shirts others offer – and we've commissioned another beautiful illustration to go on it. This year's artist is **Martin Chesterman** and you can see the results of his handiwork above.

The shirts come in long sleeves or short and in black (with white design) or white (with colour design). They identify you

as a discerning member of the fraternity of **The Wire**. And they look, shall we say, good. And we've kept the prices the same as they were last year. **Really.**

**White, or black, regular:** £10.95 including p&p.

**White or black, long-sleeved:** £14.95 including p&p.

**Overseas:** please add an extra £1 for postage costs.

**USA prices:** regular \$18, long-sleeved \$26 (inc p&p)

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Don't forget to tell us which shirt-colour you'd like!

**Wire shirts. We cut the cloth and you cut a dash.**



In this month's very august **Soundcheck**



**Wire Winners**

*We're critics make their choice of the best new releases. This month — Aretha Franklin, Stan Getz, George Frideric Handel, Franz Koglmann and more . . .*



**Soundcheck**

*Our regular A-Z review section.*



**Fast Licks**

*A quickfire checklist of more new releases.*



**Outlines**

*Round-ups, record surveys, extended reviews. This month — John Cage & Morton Feldman, new hot gospel.*

*Max Roach — live masterwork with Clifford Brown reviewed this month. Photo by Nick White*

wire winner: regal soul



ARETHA FRANKLIN

*What You See Is What You Get*  
A&M 261 724 CD/MC/LP

IT'S FATUOUS, of course, to talk about a return to form. Form, in Franklin's case, is a figment of myth, quite unrelated to the reality of her condition as a practising artist. She has never known form. Indeed, that we still regard her as Queen Of Soul tells us more about the state of soul as an aesthetic phenomenon than it does about Lady Re's true status as a contemporary icon. Yet *What You See* contains her most authoritative work since — well, at least since *Jump To It*, the first album she made under Luther Vandross's jurisdiction getting on for a decade ago.

Eschewing at last the questionable practice of wedging herself forcibly into the latest off-the-peg shiny threads, irrespective of their real suitability, she plumps instead for a classic line in outside tailoring for the lady of distinction. The Bacharach/Bayer Sager songwriting/production axis submit two cultured, if slightly overweeningly post-psychotherapeutic, songs of redemption — "Ever Changing Times", featuring a brilliant choral eruption by a multi-tracked Michael McDonald, and the studiously self-reflexive "Someone Else's Eyes" — while the Narada Michael Walden glass-machine is confined to just one slap-job, a genuinely propulsive interpretation of Sly Stone's classic slab of socio-waffle, "Everyday People".

Otherwise, it's a case of a multitude of cooks miraculously failing to spoil a nicely seasoned and balanced broth. Loath is back, for instance, and cooing out of the woman a

euphoric rearrangement of his own "Doctor's Orders" (classic 'Retha material, thinking about it), while Michel Legrand (I did you not) is thoroughly tender in his handling of Franklin's own "What Did You Give".

The voice? Well, I've enjoyed its maturation, its cruising and Franklin's loyalty to its rawest timbre over recent years, and here, unqueezed by groove expediency, it is frequently quite majestic. Check out the climax of "What Did You Give" and her trumpeting in "Everyday People", and forgive her lapse into vulgar melodrama in "I Dreamed A Dream" because, even then, her commitment to tastelessness is total and irresistible.

NICK COLEMAN

wire winner: lovely sound



STAN GETZ

*Serenity*  
Emarcy 818770 CD/MC/LP

GETZ WAS practising in his dressing-room before a concert in Finland. The promoter returned as concert-time drew near, and not wanting to interrupt, waited outside the door. When the playing stopped he heard the words, intoned by the saxophonist himself, "The incredibly lovely sound of Stan Getz".

That was one of the many obituary stories that, sadly, we had the pleasure of reading last month. Of course Getz had one of the loveliest sounds in the whole of jazz, and of course he knew it. On *Serenity* that sound is lovingly captured in a live recording from the Cafe Montmartre, Copenhagen, in 1987 — sequel to the earlier *Anniversary* on the Emarcy label. This set is, if anything, superior, the quality of compositions consistently

high. Kenny Barron's "Voyage", title-track of an earlier landmark album, provokes one of Getz's most impassioned flights, and with "Gretna Dolphin Street" brings up the more contemporary end (well, I think Bronislaw Kaper's song is contemporary). "I Remember You", from composer Victor Schertzinger via Charlie Parker and Frank Thiel, is almost pure be-bop. Victor Feldman's gorgeous ballad "Falling In Love" calls for, and receives, sumptuous playing by the leader, the Cole Porter favourite "I Love You" rounds out the set, up-tempo.

Bag and sax are sometimes low down in the mix, and once or twice Getz plays off-mike, but that's live recording. The band of course plays like a dream, especially Kenny Barron, vying with Tommy Flanagan as most sought-after accompanist. Victor Lewis's taste is impeccable, Bassist Rufus Reid is maybe inclined to twitter too much in the piccolo register. But criticism can be capricious, with its predecessor, this is one of the finest recordings of live jazz you're likely to hear.

ANDY HAMILTON

wire winner: magic operas



GEORGE FRIDERIC  
HANDEL

*Annadige*  
Emu 2292 45190 2 CD

Orlando  
L'Oiseau-Lyre 430 8452 CD

THE FUNNIEST book I've read this year is Christopher Hogwood's biography *Handel* (Thames & Hudson, £8.95), which, if it's ever filmed, would surely merit the title



*Carry On Composing*. Take, for instance, the night on which the celebrated castrato Senesino, playing the title-role in *Julius Caesar*, became "the object of ridicule when, having just sung the words '*Carier does not know what fear is*', he was visibly terror-struck by a falling piece of scenery"; or the rehearsal at which the recently-arrived star soprano Cuzzoni refused to sing a particular aria – in a flash the irate Handel had stormed onto the stage, picked up his new *prima donna* by the waist and threatened to throw her out of the window! The later hiring of a second famous soprano, Faustina Bordoni, sparked more slapstick: the rival *prima donnas* loathed each other on sight, performances were disrupted by each singer's clique of supporters booing and hissing throughout the other's arias and the two ladies finally came to blows onstage – a scandal gleefully satirised in a skit of the day which included the wonderful stage direction "*Faustina lays flat Cuzzoni's nose with a sceptre. Cuzzoni breaks her head with a gilt luster crown. Handel, desirous to see the end of the battle, animates them with a kettle-drum: a globe thrown at random hits the High Priest on the temples: he staggers off the stage*".

(Alas, no such shenanigans disrupted performances of the two operas under review, though Hogwood does report that the Queen, attending the second night of *Orlando*, was inadvertently tipped from her sedan-chair as she left the theatre.)

After more than two centuries of almost total neglect, Handel's operas are enjoying a new lease of life on disc. *Adina*, *Atalanta*, *Hercules* and *Julius Caesar* have all appeared or reappeared on CD in the last few years and within the last 12 months alone *Alessandro*, *Flavio* and *Partenope* have followed. Now we have a "world premiere" recording of *Amadigi* by the Paris-based Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre and a new recording of *Orlando*, the first on CD, by Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music, whose debut opera recording this is.

Both *Amadigi* (1715) and *Orlando* (1733) belong to Handel's series of "magic" operas, distinguished by their elaborate and spectacular stage sets and by librettos which, though technically *opera seria*, tell tales of love and wizardry somewhat removed from modern (or classical) notions of tragedy. So characters are whisked up to the heavens in magic chariots, demons and monsters prance

in hellish grottos and, in Act Two of *Amadigi*, the fountain of true love is required to gush forth real water onstage. More to the point, Handel's genius flows through this music in similarly awe-inspiring fashion; here, to quote the Erato notes, is a "torrent of melody".

To anyone who still thinks of Handel as a composer of doughty religious music (roll over *Messiah*), his operas will come as a revelation. Both *Amadigi* and *Orlando* have a melodic quickness, a delicacy of touch, that anticipate Mozart (particularly the richer, more subtle, orchestration of the later *Orlando*). In this context, the authenticity movement has proved a godsend, rescuing the 18th century from the overlaid exuberances of Romantic excess and Victorian pomp, and uncovering beneath a bright, lightly-textured, speedy and brilliantly deft music.

These are both top-class recordings. In *Amadigi*, Nathalie Stutzmann in the title-role sings superbly, as do Eiddwen Harriah as the splendidly wicked Melissa, Jennifer Smith as the defiantly faithful Oriana and Bernarda Fink as Prince Dardano, whose lovely aria "*Pena tiranna*" is arguably the opera's highspot. Minkowski marshalls his small orchestral forces with great skill, the brisk performances and intimate scale well-suited to the zestful urgency of the score.

*Orlando*, less dramatically exciting, has the finer music – including some of Handel's most gorgeous arias – and (to quote Hogwood's book) "more varied accompaniments than appear in any other of his operas". It also has the famous "mad" scene in which Handel mirrors Orlando's derangement with extraordinarily innovative use of shifting harmonies and alternating time signatures. The AAM, magnificently sensitive and assured, are matched by an outstanding team of singers led by James Bowman, dynamic in the title-role, a majestic Arleen Augér as Angelica and Emma Kirkby, typically clear-voiced as the shepherdess Dorinda. Full marks too for the commitment to authenticity which led them to use genuine 18th century wind and thunder machines!

*Amadigi*, on two CDs, is highly recommended and, at only nine minutes shorter than the three-disc *Orlando*, is excellent value for money. But *Orlando*, given a superlative performance that establishes it as one of the 18th century's finest operas, is absolutely

unmissable. So buy both – go for Baroque!

GRAHAM LOCK

wire winner: brass power

# KING OLIVER VOLUME ONE 1923 TO 1929



## KING OLIVER

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BBC RPOD 787 CD/MC

Volume 2: 1927 To 1930

BBC RPOD 788 CD/MC

ROBERT PARKER pays tribute to the King in this exceptional bounty. Here are 41 sades by the third eminence of New Orleans brass – the man who came after Buddy Bolden and Freddie Keppard – and they call for a fresh assessment of his legacy. I've already written at some length about Oliver's music (see *The Wire* 48) but listening to these records opens the casebook again on a perplexing giant.

Take his 1926 version of "Sugar Foot Stomp" (aka "Dappertmouth Blues"). The whole performance has little of the driving fluency of that by the 1923 Jazz Band, it moves with a frantic, almost raging attack. Oliver's solo is simpler than his original improvisation, yet he intensifies it, makes it harsher and perhaps more "modern" than before – which, coupled with his increasing fallibility in hitting notes just as he wants them, makes it as intriguing as his older record. Or what about "Jackass Blues"? A stony rendition of this galumphing tune in some ways, yet compare it to Fletcher Henderson's 1926 Columbia recording – Henderson has better soloists, but his is more primitive, more cluttered.

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mastering. These rare, aged records have never sounded better. The later ones seem almost hi-fi – try the sonority achieved on "Mule Face", where the bass parts positively spring out – and the separation on the early sides is like we've never heard before. If you don't know this music, expect to hear an acoustically-recorded, brass-powered ensemble, driving through rag and polyphonic march tunes, swinging as they go; then a succession of lesser and bigger bands trying to adapt New Orleans licks to the increasing sophistications of mid-20s dance music.

Excellent presentation, with a fascinating note by Parker on the problems he faced, and mostly good musical commentary by Edward Brooks (though it was disingenuous of him to let Schoenberg's quote about genius go uncredited). This is far from the complete story: there are another 23 sides by the Creole Jazz Band, 14 by the Dixie Syncopators, 35 by the Victor Orchestra. And because Oliver's music is so intensely personal, we want to hear them all.

RICHARD COOK

wire winner: ensemble jazz

THE USE OF MEMORY



FRANZ KOGLMANN

*The Use Of Memory*  
hat AKT 6078 CD

VARIOUS LONG-SERVING villains such as Stan Keaton and Shorty Rogers were approvingly referred to in the *White Line* music reviewed by our Editor in *Wire* 79, and Koglmann goes further here. Elements of Bix, Miles and Chet are fused in the title piece, "Tune Up" is shown to be not too far removed from "Clarinet Marmalade", and perhaps this does indeed suggest one of the uses of memory.

Besides overt allusions like these, others arise which are presumably accidental or at least unconscious: part of "Constantin's Dream" echoes "Sloth" in Bill Russo's *Seven Deadly Sins*. Further dimensions are implied by some of these pieces being inspired by Piero della Francesca or Chirico, another being dedicated to Coteau, another paying homage to Schubert.

The ambience is obviously sympathetic, yet one is reminded of such works as Bernd Alois Zimmermann's "Musique Pour Les Soupers Du Roi Ubu" (1966), which he described as "a baller noir". This is so densely layered with quotations, ancient and modern, that even the most lynx-eyed connoisseur cannot hope to catch them all. Some of Koglmann's pieces are likewise studies in altered meanings, because the quotations and allusions are distorted, then further changed in their effect by the new contexts in which they are placed. If Zimmermann's Ubu music is a nightmare version of the baroque dance suite, some of Koglmann's pieces can seem like a conflation of record illustrations for a jazz history course. But whereas Zimmermann projects no central identity Koglmann is clearly Koglmann.

For one thing, he has arrived at a quietly (well, sometimes noisily) original ensemble concept of his own, and his players well understand its sudden yet deep-laid shifts of emphasis and direction. Koglmann's thinking is not simply a matter of clothing the inherited vocabulary of jazz in new sounds and textures, for the relationships between the different tempos that a performance may have say at least as much. The Coteau piece, "Der Vogel", the longest here, is a striking example. And notice how in "Château De Bouges" Robert Weiss's headlong piano solo briefly slackens and then switches (almost like a cinematic transition) to a dreamy slow waltz. The whole ensemble drifts in and the situation becomes more complex, with diverse gestures superimposed, the pulse indefinite, one episode growing out of another, the final shape balanced, satisfying.

Despite which, those who cannot bear music which does not have a rhythm section pounding away non-stop will presumably hate Koglmann's jazz. He will probably have no difficulty in taking that as a compliment because these pieces contain plenty of evidence of a sense of humour. My favourite is

the timeless passage for trombone and tuba in "Der Vogel" which besides hinting at the free jazz episode to come later evokes a brace of seriously disturbed hippopotamuses.

MAX HARRISON

wire winner: water music

TORU TAKEMITSU

*Various Works*  
Virgin Classics VC7 91180 CD

WHILE I am reluctant to usurp the function of posterity I would venture that Takemitsu will be regarded as one of the half-dozen most important composers of the late 20th century. If not as influential as Boulez, Stockhausen or (one of his major influences) Messiaen, he matches them all in the rigorous integrity and gem-hard beauty of his personal sound-world.

Except for the most recent composition, 1988's "Tree Line", all the pieces on this release evoke water as a metaphor for the music's progress towards what Takemitsu describes as "the sea of tonality".

"riverman", recorded during the filming of Channel 4's series *Sinfonietta II*, is another homage to James Joyce, taking its inspiration, like the earlier "A Way A Lone" and "Far Calls, Coming Far", from *Finnegans Wake*. The other works included are "Water-Ways", "Rain Coming" and "Rain Spell" and the performers are Paul Crossley (piano), Sebastian Bell (flutes), Gareth Hulse (oboe) and the London Sinfonietta conducted by Oliver Knussen.

Takemitsu's style is no fusion of Western orchestral and Japanese classical music. It is more a subsuming of elements of both into something which, despite its obvious similarities to the music of Olivier Messiaen, is entirely original and personal. It is as if Takemitsu has reached out into a star-speckled void, dark yet not unfriendly, and drawn down flowers of light or sparkling clusters of crystals. Each rippling piano line, each shining smooch of string or woodwind colour, seems to be summoned out of nowhere, without precedent despite its clear and logical place in the scheme of the music.

Breathtaking BARRY WITHERDEN

**PETER APPELBAUM & THE  
HIEROGLYPHICS  
ENSEMBLE**

*Signs Of Life*

Arctics 422 848 654 CD/MC

THE HIEROGLYPHICS Ensemble is a 15-piece big band operating out of the San Francisco Bay area. Although formed in 1979 *Signs Of Life* is the group's first release. Leader, composer, saxophonist and pianist Peter Appelbaum is best known for his work in Don Cherry's Multi Kulti, a significant connection as the music on *Signs Of Life* draws much of its impetus and direction from that group's integrated, pan-cultural approach.

Appelbaum's compositions and orchestrations are urgent, driving and dramatic, populist in conception but with a progressive edge. Typically they revolve around knotted, staccato voicings for the brass and reeds and strong rhythmic undercurrents that pile up tempos and meters from jazz, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. They allow extensive room for improvisation and are executed with a cavalier flourish by The Ensemble.

"Candles & Stones", "Walk To The Mountain" and "Forwarding" combine the massed layered complexities of Fela Kuti's recordings with the harmonies and swing of Township Jazz. "The Last Door" is contemporary jazz-funk with a yearning, Moorish caste. "The World Is Gifted" contains a rather overbearing vocal from Sheherazade Stone but is redeemed by Norbert Satchel's soprano solo and the unexpected presence of a post-Castaways Vox Continental organ sound. "Ground" is a 90s fusion ballad complete with reggae undertones and, of all things, a bassoon solo. "Chant" and "Samantha Smith" are Appelbaum's own solo features; the first sounds like a series of advanced piano exercises but the second is the kind of heroic, stentorian ballad that wouldn't seem out of place on a Michael Brecker album.

A strange one but worth a listen.

TONY HERRINGTON

**J S BACH**

*3 Sonatas & 3 Partitas For Violin Solo*

Demo CD74485-86 CD

ANYONE who enjoys the solo saxophone music of Anthony Braxton or Evan Parker

should find plenty to interest them here, in Bach's comparable attempts to forge a specific and (relatively) new language for solo violin. And just as Parker has said that he uses various complex fingering patterns "to generate the illusion of polyphony", so Bach uses fugal form and contrapuntal lines to create what one writer has called "implied polyphony", similarly extending the technical and expressive range of the instrument to the borders of the "virtually impossible".

We don't know why or for whom Bach wrote his solo violin works, only that they were dated 1720 and never published in his lifetime. (It's not inconceivable that Bach, a violin virtuoso in his youth, simply wrote them for himself, to see just how far he could develop a polyphonic music for solo violin.) The sonatas follow the four-movement *da*



**COUNT BASIE**

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**VARIOUS**

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*chiesa* pattern, each has a second-movement fugue which, from sonata to sonata, becomes increasingly long and complex. The partitas are of four, five and six movements respectively, each movement a dance rhythm derived from either the classical Italian or newer French suite. To these forms Bach brings a typically German love of contrapuntal writing and the uniquely experimental genius to make it work in such a fiendishly difficult context – the soloist is required to carry two, three, sometimes four parts simultaneously, yet the writing is always thoroughly musical. "Refreshment of the spirit," Bach declared, was always one of his music's aims.

The lovely "Prelude" from the third partita and the third sonata's brilliantly intricate fugue are both attractive pieces, but the most

famous item here is the chaconne which closes the second partita. Described by one critic as "the Everest of violin music", it's an epic celebration of the Baroque love for embellishment and variation, the opening subject going through 64 variations in a little under 15 minutes. Violinist Jean-Jacques Kantorow passes this great test with flying colours, his playing forthright and dramatic yet sensitive to Bach's subtleties and able to sing out when required.

These performances, beautifully-recorded in 1979, are making their first appearance on CD. Originally released on LP in the early 1980s, they won a three-star accolade from the *Penguin Guide* of the day and remain highly commendable. My only complaint is that the Japanese notes have been poorly translated and/or proof-read into a garbled English, on a full-price issue from an international record label, we're entitled to expect better.

GRAHAM LOCK

First the good news: Basie's early-50s band may seem crudely "sophisticated" compared to the sophisticated "crudity" of the 30s, but its great groove and dynamic blowing leap out of the three Birdland albums. Even if soloists like Frank Foster, Marshall Royal and even Lockjaw Davis don't play anything totally memorable, it hardly seems to matter with such a spirited ensemble. Former sideman Lester Young is a bit lethargic on his brief guest appearance, but not as much as on Billie Holiday's "Fine And Mellow" from the 1957 *Sound Of Jazz* soundtrack.

That remarkable TV special only has Basie on three and a half minutes, but he is the spine of the whole enterprise. As well as Lester and Billie being his alumni, this was

the show where Basie sits watching Thelma Houston play "Blue Moon," and where he heads a one-only band including Eldridge, Hawkins, Webster and Mulligan. Add to that a Dixielandish set with Red Allen, erratic Rex Stewart and soulful Pee Wee Russell, who also duets with "modernist" Jimmy Giuffrè, and you realise how compact the jazz tradition still was.

*Kansas City*, however, is a terminally inept compilation covering 1939-58 and proving only that there's one born every minute (inept compilations, that is). The classic "Lester Leaps In", a couple of near-greats and a lot of average stuff, it's all muddily transferred except for three tracks by Joe Williams, one of them mistitled. Pass.

By an amazing oversight, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross (and Williams) were not included in *Sand Of Jazz*. The 1958 *Sing Along With* was the follow-up to L-H-R's debut *Sing A Song Of* and, for all Hendricks's verbal outflow, sounds terribly dated. Possibly useful for folks who don't know what Basie is all about, but they'd be better off with the two *Bandstand* albums.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

## BEETHOVEN

### 33 Variations On A Waltz By Diabelli, Op 120

Unicorn-Kanchana DKPCD0084 CD

ASKED, ALONG with over 50 others, to write a single variation on this waltz by Diabelli, a publisher and composer of useful educational music, Beethoven at first angrily rejected it as a "cobble's patch". He was both right and wrong, soon returning to it and, while simultaneously engaged on several other major scores, producing this nearly incredible, not to say highly mysterious, work that stands with Bach's very different Goldberg set as the greatest sequence of variations known to us.

Diabelli's waltz is at once a very bad and very good piece of music, and Beethoven obviously sensed the large-scale potentialities of this. As a musical statement it is almost comically banal, yet its two equal (16-bar) halves - moving out from tonic to dominant at the halfway mark, then back from dominant to tonic via the subdominant - provide, with their balance and simplicity, the most

solid of frameworks. And as Donald Tovey says in his revelatory essay on this piece, the theme remains central to the whole enterprise, so that the variations would not make sense without it or if separated from one another.

Of course, extreme contrasts abound, as for example between variations 20 and 21. The first is slow, quiet, and contains the work's most far out harmony and moments of deepest peace, while the second explodes with manic trills in several registers. This foreground diversity in the variations' character is in the most productive tension with an implacable background unity, and every element of the theme is developed as the composition unfolds. Not too much should be made, in any case, of the contrasts because there are such features as the three consecu-

recorded and using the Fazioli concert grand, which incorporates almost the only significant new departures in acoustic piano manufacture this century. His approach is somewhat different from that of many others who have performed this work, presumably because he has been much associated with contemporary music (Messiaen, Stockhausen, Cage etc.). My reservations are few, rather incidental, and need not be gone into here. The main point is that Hill's reading does reflect the stature, the musical and emotional scope, of this unique achievement.

MAX HARRISON

## GEORGE BENJAMIN

### Piano Sonata

Nimbus NI 1415 CD

THE *PIANO Sonata* is an early composition by the brilliant but notoriously unpolitic George Benjamin, written while he was a student at the Paris Conservatoire in 1977-78. It was first performed in 1978, and Benjamin himself recorded this version two years later, Nimbus originally issued it in 1982, and now do so again on an EP-length disc (it clocks in at 22:26).

Early it may be, but it is a substantial achievement nonetheless: cast in conventional three-movement sonata form, but not following conventional structural principles. The fast opening movement, with its dramatic bursts of light and shade, throws up not so much a theme for development as snippets of material for exploration.

The influence of Messiaen, with whom Benjamin studied privately in Paris, is evident in some of the sonorities and sound clusters which emerge here, an influence he expunged - at least as a physical presence - in later works, but they are already put to very different, highly personal ends. The nervous rhythmic progressions (notably in the third movement) are also characteristic, part of an ongoing search for a rhythmic language which draws its logic from something other than the tyranny of the bar-lines.

Benjamin is a virtuoso pianist, and the *Piano Sonata* explores the resources of the instrument as much as those of the composer; this blistering performance of it will surely remain the definitive interpretation.

KENNY MATHIESON



slow variations in C minor towards the close; indeed it is at this stage that we realise on how gigantic a scale this work is cast (it plays for an hour).

And having been in C major or minor throughout, the effect of the shift to E flat for the penultimate variation is tremendous, the more so as Beethoven here at last abandons the structure of the theme. He constructs a large double fugue with much elaborate and rule-breaking contrapuntal resource, this giving way to a final variation which returns us to the theme's once down-to-earth melody, now utterly transformed.

The imaginative richness of the *Diabelli Variations* stands as a perpetual challenge to all pianists worthy of the name. There have been many previous versions on disc and Peter Hill's is a worthy addition, beautifully

# JERRY BERGONZI

Standard Gove

Blue Note 796756 CD/LP/MC

TENORIST BERGONZI has had a rather chequered career. Best-known perhaps for what has been called his "old crazy role" with the Brubeck quartet, he has been a long time getting his own record out, with a major company at last. (He has a number of recordings on Italian labels.) Anyway, here it is at last, and it's recommended. Bergonzi is one of those strong, vertical players to whom melodic considerations are not paramount, but there's some heavy music here in the Coltrane tradition. The best cuts are the four originals; the melodic and harmonic updating of "If I Were A Bell", "Come Rain Or Come Shine", etc are not – to these ears anyway – always felicitous.

"McCoy" is a blues. Jerry's McCoy is Joey Calderazzo, former keyboardist with Michael Brecker, and whose own Blue Note debut (on which Bergonzi guested) was a patchy affair. He's heard to much better, more consistent effect here. "Arbonius Uno" is a tricky round-the-clock number named after Jerry's deaf cat, who likes to play free jazz on the piano (he's not the only deaf cat who does). Calderazzo contributes a fine, long solo on this one. "JAB" and "Conjunction" are attractive Wayne Shorter-ish ballads. Dave Santoro on bass, and another ex-Brecker alumnus, drummer Adam Nussbaum, complete the very strong line-up.

"Night And Day" has the chords of "Giant Steps" cleverly superimposed on it, though I'm not sure to what point. This, and the orientation of the playing, suggests that Jerry's next album ought to be a John Coltrane tribute – *More Lasting Than Gove* perhaps? Not that Jerry himself won't be around for a while, and on this evidence he deserves to be heard.

ANDY HAMILTON

# BIRTWISTLE/BLAKE WATKINS/MAXWELL DAVIES

Endless Parade: Trumpet Concertos

Philips 432075 CD/MC

HARRISON BIRTWISTLE witnesses a carnival in Lucca, near Pisa: "I became interested in the number of ways in which you could

observe this event, as a bystander, watching each flux pass by... or you could wander through side alleys, leaving the parade a street away, glimpsing it at a corner..." Hence "Endless Parade" (1986–7), the concert for trumpet in which themes and textures are viewed and re-viewed from different angles, in unchanged or altered ways. Virtuoso Hakan Hardenberger is the dedicatee and soloist on this first major-label recording.

Tuneful, arresting in its sonorities – yet when the BBC SO tackled the work, leader Rodney Friend was reported as complaining that "The only pleasure I get, is actually being able to play it from beginning to the end more or less accurately". (That was in *The Independent*, not the sleeve-note.) But here Sir Harry has old pal Elgar Howarth to



conduct the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. They actually play it more or less accurately from beginning to end, and moreover with fervour and conviction.

The dramatic opening states the descending four-note theme, a reference-point throughout. Forget the classical banalities of Wynton Marsalis – Hardenberger's burnished, declamatory tone, replete with rasps, growls and yelps, grips from beginning to end. Paul Patrick's vibraphone has a vital complementary role. The trumpet-vibraphone counterpoint has the sonority and something of the method of Freddie Hubbard over Bobby Hutcherson's vibes on *Our To Louch*: the string orchestra backdrop allows the purity of the trumpet lines to shine through. Birtwistle's trumpet concerto is a modern classic. It's also the most

approachable score of his I've yet heard.

Maxwell Davies's concerto reaffirms his return to relative tonal orthodoxy, the darkened tonality of Busoni. Despite, or perhaps because of, its more conservative form, it takes longer to yield its secrets. Certainly less visceral in its impact, there's a more reflective mood especially in the slow movement. The concerto by Michael Blake Watkins is very Romantic, even "neo-Romantic", for a pupil of Elizabeth Lutyens (composer of some of the most austere beautiful 12-tone music). Watkins is from a younger generation, and it's interesting that his should be the most traditional work here.

There is too much to write on these remarkable works in the space of a short review (The CD is excellent value, incidentally, at 79 minutes.) Although, on this evidence, it is Birtwistle and not his more widely-known contemporary who is producing the most challenging and important music today, this is a recording to play and savour many times.

ANDY HAMILTON

# ART BLAKEY

The Best Of Art Blakey

EMARCY 848215 CD

THE TITLE of this compilation is something of a misnomer. What we have is eight live tracks, six of which are from 1958 or 1959 (recorded mostly in Paris), one from 1966 and one from 1979, no duels but certainly not the "best" by a long chalk. Lee Morgan, Barney Wilen and Bobby Timmons are well represented, playing on "No Problem", "Moanin'", "I Remember Clifford" and "Whisper Not".

Wilen is in good form on "No Problem", soaring into his solo with a siren Trane whistle. Morgan sounds playful, almost coy, in comparison Benny Golson's "Whisper Not" is a masterpiece of subtle growling, an almost cerebral blues. This is the Messengers at their most laid-back and it's a sound they never repeated in later, harsher years.

During his stay, the influence of pianist Timmons over the band was enormous. On "Moanin'" you can hear his combination of Horace Silver's funk with the two-handed approach of Red Garland or Errol Garner which hooked and balanced the drums. With Timmons departing at the end of 1959

the responsibility for rhythm lay firmly with Blakey as evidenced on "Night In Tunisia", which is dominated by drums and percussion.

We end with the "Blues March", notable for James Williams on piano (what's he doing now?) and the brilliant Robert Watson on alto – we know what he's doing now.

There's nothing to be gained from this collection that you couldn't get with interest from any one of the classic Blue Notes Tributes to a career as rich as Blakey's can't be done on the cheap. **ROLAND ROMANAN**

**ART BLAKEY, DR JOHN,  
DAVID "FATHEAD"  
NEWMAN**

*Bluesiana Triangle*

Windham Hill Jazz WB0125 CD

MORE of a pentagon really, with the addition of Essiet Okon Essiet on bass and Joe Bonadio on percussion. *Bluesiana Triangle* is an intriguing release, each corner representing a different angle on blues: Blakey the jazz master, John the boogie man, and "Fathead" visiting most points in between.

The chunky piano of Dr John is the dominant personality. On the first track, a straight-ahead medium tempo swinger, it judders and stomps, throwing out the odd tremelo that sounds refreshingly rude in this smooth context. He is more at home in the rolling shuffle of Earl Forest's "Next Time You See Me", punching our solid boogie. The Hammond organ is pressed into service to trust the saints who are forever "Marchin' In". A rubato, gospel intro leads to a slightly uncomfortable Latin/funk rhythm with some slick changes – quite strange actually.

Blakey's drums smile to themselves, relaxed but luminous. They fit perfectly with Bonadio, who adds discreet bongos here and there. During a light, rippling, percussion duet the Messenger drops tons into open spaces with finesse, for once not building to an onslaught but tickling the kit playfully. Newman fulfils his role as tennis player dutifully, demurely, occasionally making a witty or sardonic remark.

All in all a very modest disc. John needs more freedom; Blakey needs more fire, though listening to his gravelly voice, barely escaping his constricted throat, singing: "For

all we know we may never meet again" is almost unbearable. We'll be hearing you, in all the old familiar places. **ROLAND RAMANAN**

**BOBBY BLAND**

*The 3B Blues Boy*

Acc CDX HD 502 CD

*The Voice*

Acc CDX HD 525 CD

BETWEEN 1949 and 1971, Bobby Bland was the fourth most popular singer on the *Billboard* R&B charts, some way behind James Brown and Ray Charles, closely nudging Fats Domino, but streets ahead of Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Otis Redding, Smokey Robinson – singers whose subsequent reputations



have eclipsed Bland's. But for black audiences in the 50s and 60s, Bland was *The Man*, a portly sex symbol with a world-weary vocal demeanour that spoke directly heart to heart.

He sang jump blues and soulful rumbas, gospel scremers and country weepers, with a facility only Ray Charles could match, and which has diminished his reputation among critics who value "innovation" over adaptability, vocal abandon over expressivity. But his reputation is in the ascendant again, and these two collections, spanning his heyday, 1952–1969, confirm his stature.

In 1952, Bland was a hoarse shouter, his blues urban and canny: the earliest tracks feature vibes, a citified foil to his country slurs. The vocal style was distinctive, filled with melancholy resignation, notes flattened

for emotional emphasis, melisma held in check by smart arrangements. His most distinctive vocal trope was an anguished falsetto sob which at the turn of the decade unexpectedly metamorphosed into a leonine roar derived more from gospel than from blues.

Never more than two steps from the blues, Bland inflected his laments with a gospel singer's panache, adding an intensity that could be almost unbearable. The second of these collections shows his vocal panaxysms at their most extreme, but the refined vocal colouring never degenerates into a squawk. At times the orchestra carries the melody as if Bobby is too worn down to cope, but that's skilful understatement, not vocal ineptitude. From a nonchalant swagger to vengeful despair, Bland's stylish voice turns weather-worn (clashes into newly mined drama, and these generous anthologies pay tribute to one of the great singers. **NICK KIMBERLEY**

**THE LORRAINE BOWEN  
EXPERIENCE**

*Mini Albums 1 & 2*

Squared Skirt MC only

LONGTIME *Wired* readers may recognise the name of Lorraine Bowen, for several years our trusty admin assistant and now a prospective pop star. Lorraine vouchsafes that her office liberation song "No More" – *No more typing! no more filing! no more making the tea* – is not about her time at *The Wire* and I know that's the truth because I'm the one who always has to make the tea here.

An ex-Dinner Lady – the group broke up after releasing the droily-titled *There Knees Have Seen The World* – Lorraine has now gone (almost) solo: she sings all the songs on this tape and plays piano, cello, accordion, clarinet, recorder, bass guitar and tambourine as well as writing all the material and recording and producing the second side.

The music is in the gentle English folksy-pop tradition that stretches from George Formby to Billy Bragg, via the glorious DIY punk heritage of The Raincoats, TV Personalities and Desperate Bicycles. Tunes are simple yet catchy, lyrics are simple yet astute. Most songs deal with everyday situations – going to the launderette, falling in love, coming home drunk on the late-night bus –

but they also touch with quiet wit on some crucial issues: rape, sexual harassment, defecating the environment.

Best tracks are the singalong "Crumble Song" — "Everybody's good at cooking something and I'm good at cooking crumble" — and the faster, insanely catchy "My Boy's Learning To Play The Violin", with its brilliant 'bad violin' breaks. One or twice the songs teeter on the brink of banality but, equally, a couple of the more ambitious songs — "Wow!", "The Railway Station Song" — suggest a serious songwriting talent in the making.

Recording quality is somewhat lo-fi but well listenable, and there's a great photo on the insert! I could say more, but it's time for me to put the kettle on again. Buy, buy, buy. **GRAHAM LOCK**

Available from Paul Martin, 36A Spencer Row, London NW5  
1AP. Price £4.50 plus p&p. Cheques payable to Lorraine Bowen

**LESTER BOWIE NEW YORK  
ORGAN ENSEMBLE**  
*The Organist*  
DIW 821 CD

LESTER BOWIE has always remained conscious of his place in the tradition of jazz brass musicians, a lineage that unerringly leads back to Louis Armstrong, the foundation of his style. His playing also refracts the tonal distortion of Ellingtonians James "Bubber" Miley, Cootie Williams and the half-valve techniques of Rex Stewart as well as the influence of Dizzy Gillespie, as his fast-moving solo on Little Milton's 1966 version of "Who's Cheating Who" revealed. But latterly, with his Roots To The Source Band, his Shaw 'Nuff ensemble and his Brass Fantasy, he has also added another leaf from the Armstrong guide book, that of underlining his performances with a very strong visual correlative of vaudevilian ban.

It was as if he was seeking to release the music from the grip of humourless mastery with a serio-comic assertion that jazz could be fun too. If, on occasion, his Brass Fantasy could be a little stiff-limbed, his New York Organ Ensemble aims for that big sound but with greater flexibility. Amina Claudine Myers, purged of the excesses of rampant poor taste on her Novus albums, emerges as

linchpin and model of stylistic discretion. Her use of foot-pedals pushes the ensemble just as much as any bass player while her solos have a hint of Basie-like minimalism and slot neatly alongside the frontline.

Bowie on "Angel Eyes" is a delight, even though the track itself sags a bit in the middle; far better is "Sonala Nobala" plus "The Burglar" and "Ready Joe", the latter two straightforward 12-bar blues. What is noticeable is that the musicians are enjoying the session; it communicates. Watts and all, Bowie makes his music work.

STUART NICHOLSON

**JAMES BROWN**  
*Love Over-Due*  
Scotti Bros 510 079 CD/EP/MP



He's back, and he sounds as if he's proud too. This is Brown's cleanest and most streamlined album in years: nothing here we haven't heard before from the veteran soul maestro, and nothing he probably hasn't done better at some point in the past. But there's no disasters, no dead-end grooves, it's a good band and they play it tight and straight. There's little more to ask of a James Brown record.

The voice isn't what it was. He chews up consonants as if he were turning into Joe Turner. But that lends a kind of war-weary heroism to a ballad like "Teardrops On Your Letter". Most of the other seven songs are groove pieces of some sort: "Dance, Dance, Dance To The Funk", "Standing On Higher Ground" and sundry other exhortations,

none of them intolerable — even "It's Time To Love", one of those everybody-in-the-world-join-hands songs, is bearable.

This is old-fashioned funk. There's a digital gloss on the sound, but it's horns, guitars, bass and drums, and JB testifying on top. He works harder than he did at his London concert in July. Although his great music is always on singles, he's a great albums artist too, because you only get the full measure of his eccentricity and craziness over the length of an LP. This one is routine, perhaps. But it's a routine worth savouring.

MIKE PESH

**HAROLD BUDD**  
*By The Dawn's Early Light*  
Capitol 9266/69 CD/EP/MP

HAROLD BUDD's *The Pavilion Of Dreams* was one of the authentic delights of the late 70s, and I have to admit to finding most of his subsequent records disappointing. After creating a unique and highly unusual sound-world (consisting largely of piano, harp, tuned percussion and wordless voices) he seemed to abandon it almost immediately in favour of electronics, and instead of those long, tortuously logical structures which stretched over most of an LP side, subsequent albums have tended to offer us sequences of brief, impressionistic vignettes, inconsequential droplets from the New Age waterfall.

On the whole, however, *By The Dawn's Early Light* is a pleasant surprise and a return to earlier principles. True, the tracks are still short, and there are still those synths rippling away in the background, but Budd has shaken off the aimless, improvisatory feel of some of his recent releases: the themes lodge in the memory, this time, and get carried over from one track to another so that a gradual sense of form starts to emerge. The instrumentation is also more interesting. Harp, slide guitar and particularly cello space up the usual acoustic and electric keyboards, and there's a spine-tingling moment on "Blind Bird" when a Hammond organ pops up from nowhere, top-heavy with vibrato, to add an extra element of ecstacy beauty.

My preview tape came without any kind of personal information, so I can't tell you who plays on the album or even who wrote the six poems which get recited at various points.

Very nice poems they are too, although in a way it's a mistake for Budd's music to be tied down to such specifics. We should be left free, ideally, to focus on those secret landscapes and private vistas which he has a special talent for disclosing.

JONATHAN COE

## CATH CARROLL

*England Made Me*

Factory FAC 210 CD/MC/LP

FIRST of all she was C.S. Miles, and she edited a brilliantly deviant Manchester fanzine, *City Life*. Towards the end, as she tired of music journalism, she was Myra Minkoff, after a character in *Confederacy of Dunes*. In between, including the brief moment she wrote for *The Wire*, she was Cath Carroll: a quiet, odd, radically estranged voice that registered dissent by going even quieter. We can take it by now that "Cath Carroll" is the most real of all her made-up names.

So the music is radically estranged semi-Brazilian technogroove, a little synthetic, a little sinister, unexpectedly well-made (programmed, mostly, by Sam Lister), and all the more alien for being so soft and smooth. Within this, she's an odd, quiet singer, lost in her spooked unease at herself and her world, an exile in her own body, her own birthplace, her gender-identity and the damaged land it got put in. "I was a Beast on the streets of New York", mumbles a (male) sample: this is Cath Grand Central, the shifting, shifty "I" she expects listeners to identify with. There's no 'there' there, as the saying goes: except that this isn't so much a drawback as the record's singular triumph, a vacant-erotic ghostworld intensity that wants out so much it can't comprehend the dominant present, or reality, or wherever it is the rest of us are stuck.

Towards the end, Steve Albini's and Santiago Durango's guitars roar out across a sanctified railroad beat: "someone's watching over you", kind of a prayer, and kind of a warning. It seems an absurd burden to put on her, but when did pop last throw up so subtly and absolutely warped a perspective? Part Smith's *Horses*. And some of us think that that—with all its impossible faults—was the best record ever made. Whatever that means.

HOPEY GLASS

## CURLEW

*Be*

Coneiform Rust 27 CD

CURLEW'S MUSIC accommodates the influence of speed metal, European classicism and urban funk by applying them to an advanced jazz rock framework. It's an approach typical of New York's downtown avant garde and *Be*'s various elements fall into place in much the same way as on recordings by Tim Berne, Wayne Horvitz, Hank Roberts and others.

*Sanjivanian George Corrales and others*

Torn Cora are responsible for the bulk of the album's compositions. Both favour bright, transient themes with which to structure the group's improvisations. Bassist Ann Rupel and drummer Pippin Barnett make for a responsive rhythm section, softening the



white rock exterior of "Hard Wood" or negotiating the sudden twists and turns of "Jim" and "Saint Dog". The playing of guitarist Davey Williams splits the difference between country blues, free jazz and heavy metal. Cartwright's solos appear at a point halfway between Pharoah Sanders and Lockjaw Davis while Cora emerges as Curlew's most remarkable asset, his ambitious solos reemerging with fresh techniques and inspiration.

Collectively, there's an abiding sense of activity. The 12 tracks contain such a rapid turn-over of ideas and events they only begin to become apparent with concerted listening. As music it's receptive, intellectually exacting, multi-directional yet secure in its own identity. Seek it out, the long-term rewards are considerable. TONY HERRINGTON

## JIMMY DAWKINS

*All For Business*

Delmark DE 634 CD

IT WAS hard luck on Jimmy Dawkins that he didn't begin his career until the late 60s. By the time he cut his first LP for Delmark in 1969, the hierarchy of the blues was firmly set, and the rock audience's interest was about to move on.

Dawkins's bad timing was our loss, because *All For Business*—his second album, recorded in 1971 with Otis Rush and the Voice Odom—shows he was one of the very best Chicago blues bandleaders. From the opening notes of Dawkins's *largest voice*, spitting emotion into the mordant title track, this band is hot.

Odom, Rush and keyboards player Sonny Thompson have all recorded in their own right. Add Rush's brilliant sax player Jim Conley, and Dawkins has a frontline with a lot of front. But under the ever-excellent hand of producer Bob Koester, they never upstage each other, obviously reveling in playing together. Four tracks run on for over seven minutes, and you'd happily hear them go on all night.

As Dawkins proclaims, "I got some of the greatest blues players in the world here with me tonight". But then he can't resist adding: "Take Otis Rush, he never had nothing..." Dawkins's songs often have a bitterly resentful cutting edge—"Welfare Blues", "Born In Poverty"—and the emotive Odom sings it like he means it.

Nowhere on earth has such a distinctive sound as the south side of Chicago—tough but tender, raw but refined. If you've missed out on Jimmy Dawkins before, it's not too late to get acquainted.

PHIL McNEILL

## THE DEEP LISTENING BAND

*Troglodyte's Delight*

What Neez WN 0003 CD

SILENCE YIELDS signs of life far too slowly for it to play an important shaping influence on popular culture. Yet after the deluge of noise penetrating every crack of contemporary living, even the all-night raves of yesterday's Acid House scene began to crave peace.

The Tarpaper Cave in upstate New York is

s/c

a good place to start. Acoustic explorers Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster and Panatosis – now calling themselves The Deep Listening Band – choose their locations according to their atmospheric and physical qualities. Just as their earlier, excellent disc *Deep Listening* caught them responding to their source sounds bouncing round the walls of an underground water cistern, *Trogodyte's Delight* sees them improvising round trickles and flushes of rain.

They start cautiously, as if reluctant to break the spell of the underground chamber's unearthly beauty. The ensemble almost indistinguishably drip clicks, bups, whistles and vocal whooshes into the rainwashed silence. As a listening experience, it's all very soothing, if rather non-engaging. Then, deep in the disc, the location's magic takes hold, and the band summons, on "Trog Arena", a mighty elemental improvisation from the bowels of the earth. Here, Dempster's didgetidid and guest percussionist Fritz Hauser's chiming woodblocks set the chamber resonating with an ancient air, which is rent with Oliveros's arching accordion lines and the wordless exploratory vocalizations of Panatosis.

This single piece is so tremendously affecting it at once justifies the band's restraint, rewards the listener's patience and illuminates their Deep Listening method of sounding out space and silence.

BIBA KOPPI

# MARTY EHRLICH AND THE DARK WOODS ENSEMBLE

*Emergency Peace*

New World/Cosmic Currents 80409 CD

SOMEbody once described Miles Davis as having the quality of *daende*, and Ehrlich quotes Lorca as saying that "Everything that has dark sounds has *daende*". With a basic instrumentation of bass (Lindsay Hornet), cello (Abdul Wadud) and clarinets (Ehrlich, who plays flutes and alto sax) the Dark Woods appellation describes both the sound of the ensemble and its aim to "reach past the obvious" (Lorca again, from his definition of *daende*).

*Emergency Peace* is another demonstration of how meaningless categories have become. Do you label this jazz, chamber music, chamber

jazz, third stream? Whichever one you choose, what does it mean, and what does it matter? This is simply music that is compelling and aesthetically pleasing. Ehrlich calls it spontaneous composition and most of these pieces have been evolved over a period of time and with various participants. This is how they sounded in December 1990 and no doubt they have developed further in subsequent performances, yet there is a well-finished quality, a rightness, about these recordings. The title track is not the only one which effectively and profoundly evokes concepts of peace, whether pastoral serenity or spiritual balance.

Muhal Richard Abrams guests on "Dusk" and his own "Charlie In The Parker". Abrams, co-founder of the AACM, is a heavy presence to have as a guest. That



Chicago school's concern with exploring sounds, resonances and textures has become part of the tradition, and *Emergency Peace* draws from it to produce rich and satisfying results.

HARRY WITSEEDEN

# TC ELLIS

*True Confessions*

Panley Park/Warner Bros 27497-1 CD

# ERIC LEEDS

*Times Squared*

Panley Park/Warner Bros 27499-4 CD

"Kim, I gotta do this." TC Ellis interrupts the final credits of the movie *Graffiti Bridge* to start rapping – not unlike, apparently, the

real life approach of confronting Prince in club or car and rapping into his face to get attention. It's Levi Sencer (Prince's bass player) who has taken on the job of producer and instrumentalist for most of *True Confessions*, co-ordinating clean, polished rhythms with barely a sample in sight.

The record is largely as it's annotated. "Pop Hop – Popular Music on the Strength of Hip Hop", with Ellis coming on as someone who wants to be liked rather than as a rapper with a cause or an attitude. He is less strong when on a serious footing and the Parental Advisory label on the cover is as close as the album comes to confrontational rap like an NWA or a Public Enemy. Most of this music is made of neatly produced rhythms of the kind of adult pop that in a better pop world would unseat the MC Hammers *et al* with superior instrumentation and arrangements.

There's a nice tongue-in-cheek, reined-in version of Prince's fast pop "Girl O My Dreams", Richard Pryor samples over Levi's tidy blues on the funny "Somebody's Got To Love Her", George Clinton helps out with light funk on "Pussycat" and Prince himself employs girl-backing vocals with a suggestive putt on the no-foot-wrong vaginal pop of "Miss Thang". Voice-wise Ellis is confident, even witty, but on the "message" side he's better off with the rolling rhythm of "Brothers And Sisters" and its unmythical plea than with any haughty observations.

Eric Leeds provides the James Brown horn on one Ellis track but the connection here between the albums is the pantheonic musical embrace of Prince production. This is saxophonist Leeds's first album as leader since leaving Prince's full-time line-up. Back in '87 he played with the low-key grouping Madhouse, a two-record Paisley Park instrumental band (including Levi and Prince keyboardist Matt Fink) *Times Squared* is somewhat less structured than the well-paced, trade-marked sound of Madhouse, being looser and ranging over various styles with, on occasion, a slightly unclear direction.

At its worst (the Prince composed "Cape Horn") it's teeteringly close to being classified as "easy listening", and in a couple of places it's in an uncomfortable point between Kenny G and *Saxual* System-style Herbie Hancock. At its best (the opening track – of solo





Eric Leeds, on alto, tenor, baritone, flute, synth, percussion and drum programming — and the whole of the later, Prince-inflected numbers) it remains a firm echo of Madhouse with synthesizer-heavy, solid compositions. Otherwise, there's good Latin dance with "Easy Does It", a Leeds/Prince composition with Atlanta Bliss on trumpet and feather-affecting percussion from Larry Fratangelo.

For me, though, the title track gives out best, although there's little leeway for Leeds on this one (Prince takes all the other instruments.) Generally, Leeds works better under a tighter construction or anchored with baritone. And the tenor suits him better on something with a faster pace, as its effect can wane on less demanding or more quietly emotive areas.

ANDREW POTTERHAY

# JAMES EMERY/ILIAD QUARTET

*Turbulence*

Kearney Factory Works KFW106 CD

ANNOTATOR KEVIN Whitehead makes a cogent case for this music as real electric jazz: everything early 70s fusion failed to deliver. It is certainly spicy and bright: Michael Formanek plays acoustic bass and saxophonist Marty Ehrlich does not play clichés. Fusion sonics are supplied by Rob Schwimmer's keyboards and the leader's guitar and guitar-synth.

Despite the fusion connotations, some of the tunes — "March Oblique", "Ashata", "One Eleven" — recall Emery's former employer Anthony Braxton, having his bebop-plus trickiness (though even the presence of drummer Gerry Hemingway does not give them Braxton's nervy edge). Everything is played with a grace and bounce that a band like Earthworks would give their eyeteeth for. But that is not the point: it was not fusion's lack of delicacy that dragged it down.

Fusion failed because academic standards triumphed: the grid of the classical score — both metric and harmonic — was respected more than the specific weight of the improvised sounds. Hence all the tedious nonsense about "difficult" time signatures, as if 9/8 was the road to heaven. It forgot the blues, the great palette of speech-based rhythms and harmonic contradiction jazz paints with

Emery forgets the blues too.

Everything is too tidy, even the spooky bits are predictable. Whether either compositional vision or improvised spontaneity it all becomes an exercise in puffing minutiae.

Ornette Coleman's harmolodics set the agenda for jazz populism back in 1977, rendering jazzrock obsolete at a stroke. String Trio Of New York is a much preferable showcase for Emery's undoubted virtuosity. The instrumental accuracy here is state-of-the-art, but the music is about as exciting as George Melly talking about surrealism on TV (again).

BEN WATSON

# STAN GETZ

*Jazzbabe Berlin '78*

Repertoire REP 1915-WZ CD

JAZZ  
BOHNE



LIVE RECORDING from (literally) the "Jazz Platform", one of a series of events established by East German radio in the good old days of Socialist public service broadcasting. The sleeve-note raises a chuckle or two on account of its Teutonic heaviness. "Getz and Brookmeyer 'soulbrothers' in means of esthetical intentions. Both soloists play with transcendental sovereignty." Getz's pianists "mostly know how to compose themselves" — this recalls to mind Kliban's cartoon of Beethoven composing himself, but in the light of the leader's tyranny is probably only too true.

The main trouble is the modish impedimenta that clutter up the recording — portentous rock rhythms, congas popping merrily away. Keyboardist Andy Laverne seems to have been responsible for a lot of

that ugliness, he contributes "Pretty City" which certainly isn't, contriving to mix a rock feel with a conga solo. His piano solo on "Willow Weep For Me" is horribly modal, and would have composer Ann Ronell rotating moderately furiously in her grave. But Getz plays brilliantly over the congas on the Wayne Shorter composition "Lester Left Town", and Jobim's "O Grande Amour" is very pleasant, Bob Brookmeyer featured on valve trombone.

Getz's indulgence in rock influences in the 70s got up Benny Green's nose, and for once I sympathise with our constrainer's distress. That was before the saxophonist's glorious Indian summer from which recordings are still emerging. But despite my reservations, there's much good playing on this release.

ANDY HAMILTON

# JOHN HARBISON

*The Flight Into Egypt and Other Works*

New World 80395-2 CD

JOHN HARBISON generally favours a more conventionally tonal register than many of his contemporaries (he was born in 1938), and has also shown a marked predilection for vocal works, from songs to opera. *The Flight Into Egypt* is a fine example, building from a poignant counter-pointed oboe melody which is echoed throughout the piece. The choral writing is imaginative, and while far from radical, is formally more daring — although on a much more intimate scale — than Leo Sowerby's *Forerunners Of Man*, also just released by New World (80394-2) in a performance by the William Ferris Chorus.

Roberta Anderson (soprano) and Sylvan Sanford (baritone) share the *Flight* text with the Cantata Singers, while the settings of poems by Robert Bly, Wallace Stevens and James Wright which make up *The Natural World* are sung by mezzo-soprano Janice Felty, with the LA Phil's New Music Group.

Felty has already recorded Harbison's intriguing *Alonzo Saeki* (as has soprano Dawn Upshaw, on Nonesuch 79187), and seems fully at home with his writing. These lyrical, beautifully constructed pieces increasingly flesh out the bare textures of the instrumental prelude, imitating the natural cycle from winter sparseness to summer fecundity.

By contrast with the intimate register of these works, the *Concerto For Double Bass Choir And Orchestra* is perched in a brass public voice, brassy and boisterous, but leavened with some beautifully lyrical playing from the LA Philharmonic under Andre Previn.

KENNY MATHIESON

## ROY HARGROVE

*Public Eye*

BMG Norma PD83111 CDLP

THE LUMINOUS virtuosity inspired by Wynton Marsalis can ultimately be limiting if it is used in the service of other people's ideas.

One of the problems posed by jazz neo-classicism during the 1980s was that of direction. In a musical culture so dependent on recordings it raised the question of precisely what was being celebrated when a constant stream of new young signings could offer only virtuosity at the expense of originality. The shadow of the records they sought to imitate loomed large in the minds of both performer and listener. For the listener, however, the originals often proved more irresistible.

Yes, the news represented the future of the music within their own self-imposed limitations of style. Yes, neo-classicism was, in the context of its times, a refreshing return to order and consolidation in the face of the music that had preceded it.

But now it is time to move on. The challenge is harnessing all that virtuosity to achieve something more striking than the *day to*. *Public Eye* seems to catch this process mid-stream, one of the problems of a major label recording contract offered in advance of artistic maturity. As we join Roy Hargrove's odyssey up the learning curve he is now much looser, the title track alone shows greater abandon than the cool deliberation of his debut album.

The rhythm section seems to force him from the tried and tested. Bassist Christian McBride, at present at Julliard and who came to fame with Joey DeFrancesco, is a major talent and swings with a Ray Brown-like power that alone is worth the price of the album. *Public Eye* is this semester's report on an undoubtedly talented trumpet player and the progress is good. But the challenge

remains - where to go from here?

STUART NE HOLSON

## JOE HARRIOT

*Swings High*

Cadillac SGC/MLP 12-150 LP

DIGGY REECE's line "The Take" provokes the outstanding performances here; the tricky theme stimulates some excellent solo work, especially from trumpeter Stuart Hamer, who could be very nearly as improbably original as the composer himself and made an excellent foil for the leader's own playing. It's actually better than Reece's own Blue Note version, and certainly truer to the original soundtrack (for a movie called *Nowhere To Go*).



Harriot's own playing was founded on an amalgam; there are traces of Pepper, Parker inevitably, a bit of Ornette, but more and more these days he sounds like an alto-playing Sunny Rollins to me - check out "Polka Does And Moonbeams", and try to hear it about an octave.

By this time - the album was recorded in 1967 - his early experiments with free-form and ground-breaking work with Indian musicians had been done (and largely ignored); he was back in his favourite format, a quintet which aspired to the drive and cohesion of Horace Silver's, which Harriot greatly admired. The shall "Shepherd's Serenade" and the more laid-back "Strolling South" conform to that mode.

It's a fascinating document, although badly recorded (it led me to check out my K9,

and it was OK), done for Doug Dobell in the first instance, it's got all the cleanliness and ambience that the john under the shop then had. Don't let that stop you from catching up with it, though, and don't miss Phil Seamen's often inventive drumming.

JACK COOKE

## HENRY COW

*Legend*

East Side Digital ESD 80482 CD

*Unrest*

East Side Digital ESD 80492 CD

*In Praise Of Learning*

East Side Digital ESD 80492 CD

By 1973 the left-field in British rock music was seriously wanting. The Soft Machine was still around, but in name only, and their many imitators seemed content merely to play the margins rather than to boldly strike out at new territory. But then there was *Legend*, a rawly but tantalising debut platter from a hitherto little known band, Henry Cow. Sure, the Suits' influence could be felt, Zappa's too. What made Henry Cow so special, though, was both a sound sense of classical structure and a penchant for the exploratory rigours of free improvisation, parallel paths which they developed to full effect on the albums which followed.

They should have been the new Soft Machine. Yet whilst their influence permeated throughout the European rock-avant garde, they never scaled beyond the critical placards back home. If there is a point to re-issuing Cow's material beyond any immediate (and doubtlessly small) commercial consideration, it's this: the ground which Henry Cow uncovered, both musical and technological, is still very much uncharted territory within the realms of British music, particularly their approach to improvisation, using the studio to further sculpt from the spontaneous.

The inclusions of extras on all three CDs (all of which veer towards their more improvisatory explorations) will doubtless lure the faithful to discard their battered vinyl, but then not all of the albums have benefited from the increased dynamics of CD. *Legend* still sounds cluttered and, thanks to the

necessity for remixing and re-recording (the original masters were lost), not a little precarious fidelity wise. In contrast, the later *In Pursuit Of Learning* rings out with the charged atmospherics and clarity denied its original issue, lending real musical weight to the polemical punch of the lyrics.

For the as-yet-unconquered, *Unrest* is the ideal starter: equal measures of structured and free-playing, less derivative of The Softies' whimsical air, more focussed and genuinely idiosyncratic. DAVID B.L.H.

**JOHN HICKS**  
*Hells Bells*

Stereo-Real 660/514002 CD

*Power Trio*

Nones PD99547 CD

*Live At Maybeck Rustal Hall*

Concord CCD 4312 CDM

In EARL HICKS had a 'trumpet-style', influenced by Louis Armstrong (though I always thought it wasn't easy to discern), Hicks began from a 'tenor-style', developing out of Coltrane. It's evident on the earliest recording here, *Hells Bells* from 1975. True, there's a lot of McCoy Tyner too, but always just at that point in the music where it holds the implication that this is where Trane would come charging back in, here comes Hicks pouring on another bucketful of notes. And it generally works.

Clint Houston on bass and Cliff Barbaro on drums back him up exuberantly, and although once in a while there's a feeling that they're all making notes more than putting them to a purpose, their sheer uncomplicated joy in the fact that they can do it carries it through.

The *Power Trio* disc puts Hicks in with Cecil McBee and Elvin Jones, similar format but it's 15 years later and there's a touch of the supergroup replacing the adrenalin-rush of the earlier set. There's more space, more air, but there's also a bit more floweriness and sometimes self-regard. Keith Jarrett-ish, in other words. Yet Ellington's "Chaise Bridge" is nicely done, while "Duke's Place" generates considerable momentum, then offers some rather surprising uncertainties and misunderstandings around the eight-

minute mark. This momentary revelation of human frailty comes as a reassuring thing within this endless display of bravura technique.

The set from Maybeck is a solo recital from a similarly recent date. This setting has enabled Hicks to extend his repertoire and he's made an intelligent and interesting choice of material. What he makes of it has rather more runs and trills than even his style requires, but at this stage of his career nobody's going to persuade him to leave anything out, though there's a good tight reading of Kurt Weill's "Speak Low" and a version of Monk's "Rhythm-A-Ning" that has a Tatum-esque design though it lacks something of the logic of either pianist. Bud Powell's "Oblivion" is perfectly suited to Hicks's headlong style, however, and works



well, whilst Nat Cole's "Straighten Up And Fly Right" which closes the set, is quite a gem. JACK COOKE

**LIGHTNING HOPKINS**  
*Blues Train*

Masterman MEX1901 CD

WHEN HE recorded these tracks in Houston, Texas, and New York in 1950/51, Lightning Sam Hopkins had been recording less than five years but had already cut over 100 tracks. Like John Lee Hooker, he was a gun for hire, hammering out traditional 12-bars on a big-bodied electric guitar to create the seeds of R&B, and his blend of blues and boogie had made him a national star with black listeners.

By the mid-50s, however, Hopkins had been eclipsed by the tougher R&B sound of Chicago, and his recording career dried up until 1959 when blues archivist Sam Charters 'discovered' him in his home town of Centerville, Texas, put an acoustic guitar in his hand, and made him the first big country blues name among the white folk audience.

*Blues Train* contains some of his best unadorned electric blues – accompanied on occasion by double bassist Donald Cooks – but you can see why he would appeal to the folkies. Despite his ever-present shades and gold teeth, Hopkins was a gentle soul. His playing was simple but accomplished, his voice warm and worldworn, his songs autobiographical.

This set opens with his biggest hit: a nudge-nudge boogie titled "Coffee Blues", and "Hello Central", a poignant hobo lament about trying to call his girl because "the train don't let me ride no more", with an unresolved ending that is sheer poetry.

Hopkins died in 1981, aged 69. His sound may lack impact, but he was a genuine minstrel whose songs repay the patient listener. PHIL MCNELL

**DANIEL HUMAIR**  
*Surrounded*

Blue Flame 90322 CD

INCREDIBLE ROCK-ROLL on this selection of (mostly) live material from 1964-87. The soloists who flash past include Eric Dolphy, Kenny Drew, Eddy Louiss, Gerry Mulligan, Phil Woods, Michel Portal, Tere Montoliu, Jane Ira Bloom, Martial Solal, Johnny Griffin, and Joachim Kuhn. For many who attended the concerts Humair was likely a mere sideman, "only" the drummer. Listening to the selections in sequence one gets a very strong impression of the continual challenge of the job and sympathizes with Humair's decision to cast himself, just this once, as the star of his own movie. The anthology certainly hammers home the point that he's been holding up his end of the ever-changing gig for the best part of 30 years.

He's at his freest on the 1974 duet with Purl (they're still playing together), using differing pressures on the toms and deadening cymbals to colour some wild bass clar-

met, then switching to a lightly skipping beat behind Michel's bandoneon. On the selections with Woods ("Nice At St Nick's"), Johnson ("Wee") and Montoliu (Benny Golson's "Stable Mates" at a gallop), he proves that he's got hop sewn up. Free or otherwise, he's a very *moet* drummer, each adroit fill placed just so, no accent that doesn't serve a purpose, all dropped bombs hitting the target.

The two 1964 Dolphy tracks, "Les" and "Serene", with the late great Eric on staggering rapid-fire alto sax and bass clarinet, and Kenny Drew on piano, will excite collectors the most. On "Serene", a 26-year-old Humair, though not favoured in an old-fashioned jazz mix (drums somewhere in the middle distance) still reveals strong traces of Philly Joe Jones in the way he plays *with* the solos.

With time this trait becomes more pronounced and personalised, on a 1970 track with organist Eddy Louiss. Humair seems to be decorating the solos from the inside out, and anticipating every melodic line. The sometimes uneven Joachim Kühn Trio comes over splendidly on "Cesar" (1985), an angular, stop/go composition from Michel Portal's pen, that leaves plenty of room for Humair's effects (including the trademark dragging of the heel of the stick across the cymbal's radius, making a whooping carca-like noise). "Espace Sonore No 1" finally finds Humair alone using lots of tight, dry staccato sounds in an intelligently organised drum composition.

Very good. Now someone should compile a similar anthology for Humair's frequent partner, bassist J.F. Jenny-Clark, which would be even more hogging in its range, taking in all the options from Helen Merrill to Karlheinz Stockhausen. **STEVE LARK**

# DAVID LIEBMAN

*If They Only Knew*

Timescape JSP 151 CD

*Nine Again*

Red Bull 127251 CD/LP

*If They Only Knew*, writes Liebman, "was originally dedicated to those music critics whose prejudicial and biased views are detrimental to the whole idea of music and

art." OK, Dove, I don't need a brick house to fall on me.

The timeless album dates from 1980 when the band was touring Europe and features a stellar congregation: Terumasa Hino, John Scofield, Ron McClure and Adam Nussbaum. Now, I know enough to recognise good jazz when I hear it, and I was engaged by *If They Only Knew* right from the slinky blues intro of the title track, featuring juicy playing from McClure and Scofield. There's precious little slinkiness thereafter, though there is a pause for breath when Liebman's tenor waxes fat and fulsome for "Autumn In New York".

*Nine Again* is from 1989 and showcases Liebman in duet with pianist Franco D'Andrea. Whilst a considerable contrast to the quintet, it is still a riveting listen, as original

NINE AGAIN

LIEBMAN

D'ANDREA

and stimulating as Sheppard and Tippett's *66 Shades Of Lipstick*, which features the same instrumentation. The programme for *Nine Again* is taken from jazz classics like "Caravan", "Freedom Jazz Dance" and "Sophisticated Lady" and standards like "Autumn Leaves" and "Get Out Of Town". They are all transformed, given a fresh and intriguing new look: even "Sweet Georgia Brown"

HARRY WITFREDEN

# GEORGE LLOYD

*Piano Concertos No's 1 and 2*

Albany TRQV 057-2 CD/MC

APART FROM the glacial *Symphony No 4*, George Lloyd never came closer to a full expressive understanding of his horrific war-

time experiences on the Arctic convoys than in his first two piano concerti. Lloyd's frail health broke down repeatedly after the war and his compositional output is punctuated by long gaps – absences rather than silences – in which the music gestated more slowly and painfully.

The two concerti were written in the early 1960s, after Lloyd heard the late John Ogdon (another troubled soul) for the first time. To that extent the choice of form was largely contingent, Lloyd might every bit as well have conflated the themes of the two concerti into a single, Mahlerish drama. But, as with the fourth symphony, it is wrong to assume that they are unrelentingly dark works. Part of his intention in the symphony was to convey some of the delight and camaraderie that counterpoints the violence and tragedy. Here, the two elements are carefully integrated rather than juxtaposed. The grim humour that surfaces in the second work (itself a spill-over of material from the first) is inspired by Hitler's on-camera yug at the fall of France, and its programme seems, to judge by the fading trumpet calls of the conclusion, to be quietly optimistic.

By the sharpest contrast, the first concerto, subtitled *Synagoga*, is a brutal work, a descent with little internal evidence of redemption. Lloyd carried a heavier burden than most into the wilderness after the war, and the Biblical goat – a complex symbol that changed in a few short generations from the dressed-up show beast of the Pre-Raphaelites to Robert Rauschenberg's brutally surreal ready-made image of guilt and violence and sexual penetration – is a powerful objective correlative for a man who witnessed war's violence at first hand and clearly suffered enormous guilt at his own survival while millions marched or were marched off to die.

BRIAN MORTON

# JIMMY LYONS, ANDREW CYRILLE

*Burnt Offering*

Black Note 1201/91 CD/LP

ASTORISHING. This is Jimmy and Andrew *in ecclési*, playing as if for their lives, burning through three long improvisations recorded at a concert in Pennsylvania in 1982. Most will associate both men with the Cecil Taylor

group that created in much forked lightning in the 60s, 70s and 80s; away from Cecil, the withering intensity abides, and there are extra degrees of light and lyricism which the master might have swept them past.

Must will also zero in on Lyons – for sentimental as well as sonic reasons, since Jimmy is now gone – but Cyrille is at least an equal partner here, maybe the real energy source. He starts "Popp-A" with scattered strokes and purps on a bicycle horn, but soon settles into the full weight and measure of his drums. He makes a tremendous amount of noise – the snare, toms and cymbals seem to be in constant, rolling-over motion – yet there's never the sense of brute clumsiness which one gets from a drummer such as Tony Oxley. Cyrille finishes his firepower. He holds "Exotique" rock-steady for nearly ten minutes and takes a solo passage of rare inventiveness in the title piece.

Jimmy Lyons makes another posthumous bid for anybody's after sax hall of fame. He cuts through at every point the concentrated whirls of "Exotique" really are enough to make one dizzy, and the methodical intensification of his playing on the two longer pieces takes the listener on a steadily-rising curve that stops short of Trane's exhaustiveness. Impassioned celebration, not pointless search. The recording isn't perfect, but sound is acceptable enough.

MIKE FISHER

in the record catalogues and concert repertoire, although things are improving slowly. These discs are a valuable addition, although the most valuable of them, *American Piano Classics*, is a re-issue of her broad-minded debut recording.

I take it as a statement of intent that she should have launched a promising recording career not with some staple of the Concerto repertoire, but a series of well-chosen solo piano explorations of music by Nancarrow, Ives, Copland, Gershwin, Garner and Monk.

Her approach to the latter two integrates their music into the disc as a whole, rather than holding them up as an exhibition of her eclecticism. Many of the inflections she adds to "Monk's Point" and "Round Midnight" have their origins in Ives and Nancarrow, although Garner's "Erol's Blues" and

in a jazz idiom, but they are largely unmined territory in this classical context.

KENNY MATTHEWSON

## TAJ MAHAL

Male Bone

Columbia 791422 CD

Few debut recordings match Taj Mahal's eponymous 1967 CBS album for accomplishment and sheer exuberance: the outsize urban cowboy's outsize chuckling wail of a voice galvanised a selection of near-forgotten pre-war blues set to bright electric accompaniment. The next few years saw Mahal apparently attempting to prove his understanding and mastery of every black roots musical form as he successfully turned his talents to soul, African music and West Indian styles. Recent sightings, though, have suggested that his blues train has lacked tractive effort; a video of a Ronnie Scott's show and a first LP for Gramavision have shown an artist mellowed by the sunshine of Hawaii where he now makes his home.

But this new project has fired-up his boiler and got him choogling down the track once more. "New" is something of a misnomer, for *Male Bone* started life as a theatrical collaboration between novelist Zora Neale Hurston and Harlem poet Langston Hughes (nigh on 60 years ago, but it was never staged until last year. Asked to supply music for the play, Mahal took some of Hughes's poems, added some compositions of his own and one by old-time singer Papa Charlie Jackson, and did what he used to do best: turned them into electric blues.

His broad knowledge and deep understanding of blues styles make this 11-track set pleasingly eclectic. "Jubilee" exudes the warm cadences of New Orleans R&B. "Graveyard Mule" is planted firmly in Bo Diddley territory, with his characteristic beat and menacing echo. The pleasant surprise is "Shake That Thing", apparently a dance rhey do down in Georgia, indeed the piece bears a strong similarity to Georgia bluesman Buster Brown's "Slow Drag", with its charmingly elephantine rhythm and smiling mien.

Nowhere do Hughes's lyrics resemble any poems set to music, they sit easily in their new context and are integrated into it. *Male*



## JOANNA MACGREGOR

*American Piano Classics*

Columbia Classics 11992 CD

*Gershwin*

Columbia Classics 11992 CD

*On Broadway*

Columbia Classics 11972 CD

JOANNA MACGREGOR is fast establishing a reputation as one of the most daring and iconoclastic classical soloists working in this country, although it is not through any rampant self-publicity that she has done so. Apart from playing down her role in the innovative Platform One Festival (see *The Wire*, 89), she does not even include a short biography on these discs; there are only notes on the composers and the music.

American music is still under-represented

"Erol's Bounce" lack his rich embellishment and rickety swing.

The Gershwin warhorses on the orchestral disc (*Rhapsody In Blue*, the *Piano Concerto In F*, *An American In Paris*, all with Carl Davis and the LSO) are more familiar, although *Rhapsody In Blue* is performed in its original jazz band version, which, like Copland's earlier chamber version of *Appalachian Spring*, is a punchier and brighter work than the larger orchestral setting.

Gershwin is also the central plank of her solo set of Broadway tunes, to which she brings a fresh but slightly romantic musical consciousness. These tunes (collets are by Porter, Kern, Rogers, Harold Arlen, Harry Warren – a remarkably un-romantic reading of "42nd Street" – and Sammy Fain) may be old hat, and one which fits more comfortably

Bone shows that Taj Mahal can still raise a head of steam when the tight vehicle presents itself – unlike his record company Gramavision who, proffering a mere 33-minute playing time on a full-price CD, should be shunted into a siding and uncoupled.

MIKE ATHERTON

# THOMAS MAPFUMO

*Chamamusa*

Mango 162 539 900-2 CD/MCLP

Does it detract from Mapfumo's current commitment to roots purity that some of us recall his ill-fated attempt to turn himself into Bob-Marley-from-Zimbabwe in the early 80s? Marley's bid, of course, as well as helping his UK-based record company Island to major global status, moulded reggae into the first pop language of Third World solidarity and dissent. Mapfumo's move pretty well destroyed the first incarnation of his UK-based record company Earworks. It acknowledged Marley's and reggae's wide-ranging successes – to the detriment of *chamamusa*, the music Mapfumo had himself brought to wider significance.

His classic (*Gwindingwe Rwa Shumba*, Earworks EMW 5506, recorded in 1980) had an unforgiving, untranslatable core, with the softly hammered thumb-piano guitar cycling and circling beyond anything anyone else would dare to imitate. But the more unspecific elations over Zimbabwean struggle triumphant have receded. His people face up to the usual African post-colonial tribulations (*ibona*, his language, becomes in some mouths code for one part of the nation's aggression towards another).

Becoming an ambassador-turned-inward makes sense, and consciously acting as spokesman for his immediate countrymen, rather than a generalised pan-global community. In America especially, he's feted as the purveyor of a truer, uncompromised black folk music. *Chamamusa* reflects both the sadly chastened realism behind this fact, and some of their broader antireactionary responsibilities. Reflecting an earlier implacability without misdirecting it, it sounds at once dignified in its slow, deep-souled restraint of the pure *chamamusa* sound, and more boldly relaxed and open than ever before.

MARK SINKER

# DAVID FATHEAD NEWMAN

*Back To Basics*

Milestone MCD-9188 CD

# DAVID FATHEAD NEWMAN

*MARCHEL IVERY*

*Blue Greens And Beans*

Tonexus CD SJP 531 CD

THERE'S NO doubt that "Fathead" is a well respected musician. Muscling out from the ranks of Ray Charles's great big-band and carving out his reputation as a big-toned Texan tenor playing blues 'n' bop. And he has been contented to stay there, continuing to plough the same furrow. Perhaps that is why now, although he has continued to record steadily, he remains, at the most, a footnote in jazz histories. These two releases



indicate that there is little more of his story left to write.

The idea behind *Back To Basics* is more interesting, I fancy, than the music. Orrin Keepnews, who produced the original tracks back in 1977, decided to reproduce them but this time pairing away the strings and tinkly noises that invariably clogged up records in the 70s, to leave only Newman and the rhythm section. Freed of its sugary burden the music sounds reasonably fresh, and with musicians of the calibre of Abe Laboriel, Hilton Ruiz, Jay Graydon and Lee Ritenour, it's tight and funky. The leader plays flute, soprano, alto and tenor. His work on the lighter horns, especially the pithy attack of the flute, being the most articulate. Pleasant listening but ultimately uneventful, *Back To Basics* falls into a curious no man's land, not

contemporary but not wearing the appropriate period costume either.

Thirteen years later and Newman sounds rather tired; donning his licks like an old familiar cardigan. Trotting through tunes like "Good Bye", "Night In Tunisia" and the usual mid-tempo blues, he and fellow Texan Ivery play the standard phrases. Newman lacks the depth of feeling of a James Clay and, although dabbling in funk, he also seems to lack a sense of adventure.

ROLAND RAMANAN

# TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS

*Into The Great Wide Open*

REA 10117 LP/CD/MC

GUITARS, GUNSLINGERS, God, Hollywood, highschool, and heartbreak. The Great American Psyche is the unpredictable terrain across which Tom Petty travels in the great wide open of this album. Shrunkon dreams under big ol' skies, songs about escapism and excess litter the landscape, and passing through – *always* passing through – is Tom Petty.

There's a luscious feel to this record, but its primary strengths – Petty's remarkable vocal performance and the mesmeric quality of Mike Campbell's guitars – are too often in danger of floating off into an anodyne, aural Arcadia. It is only halfway through the second side – in particular in "Out In The Cold" – that Petty finally rocks out, and much of the opening half of the record is smothered, nodule-free music that shrinks the wide open to an alarmingly-recognisable AOR LA soundscape. That sleepy melody in "Learning To Fly" on side one drifts in and out of many of the songs and when, in the instantly puppy escapism of "Two Gunslingers", Tom tells us "I'm taking control of my life..." he compares up an almost nirvanic vision of bliss.

But to focus on the bliss is to miss the point. Petty's dawdling southern voice has never been put to better use than on this album, whether on "The Dark Side Of The Sun", where its cutting quality is nearly complemented by harmonic guitar production, or on the jangly "All The Wrong Reasons", where Petty pays homage to Roger McGuinn who makes a neat cameo appear-

ance on vocal harmonies

Perry has never really been a major contender and so much of what adds up to the total of this album is the input of Jeff Lynne. Lynne's genius with guitar production is evident here on almost every track, and very nearly manages to obscure his overriding obsession with The Beatles. Indeed, "Into The Great Wide Open", with its psychedelic guitar, is Tom playing at Beatle through the prism of ELO. "A rebel without a clue," sings Perry appropriately.

A good album that could have been truly exceptional. **NEIL TAYLOR**

# **SERGE PROKOFIEV**

*The fiery Angel*

Decca DG 669 669-2 CD

PROKOFIEV would have loved our putative New Age, reveling in its ungainly alliance of medieval arcana, ecotransparency and late capitalist individualism. But he would also have responded to the real aspirations buried deep within it. His opera *The Fiery Angel*, written in the 1920s, stars similar ingredients into a quite astonishing concoction.

The piece is set in 16th-century Germany, where all sorts of beliefs battle it out for supremacy. Renata is obsessed with the fiery angel who appeared to her in her youth, Ruprecht, in turn obsessed with Renata, agrees to help her locate her vision in its more fleshly form, but the church has had enough of this nonsense and consigns her to hellfire and damnation. She is another operatic heroine destroyed by a world which refuses to find a place for her passion.

Prokofiev enlivens the grim saga with all sorts of bizarre details, half humorous, half horrific. Like Vincent Price in a Hammer Horror movie, he stirs in a trio of singing skeletons, a malevolent Inquisitor, a Memphis-tophe who cuts bushy in the local tavern. The mix of high melodrama and low comedy is orchestrated with ghouliah irony which only underlines Prokofiev's sympathy for Renata.

Conductor Neeme Jarvi's approach here is not always sufficiently raucous, as if he's wary of making the opera too knockabout. But it's a powerful performance, buffeting the listener with contradictory musical impulses. Renata is one of the most demanding

roles in opera. Nadine Secunde copes superbly, dominating the whole five acts, and every man she meets. Is she *fièvre fatale* or innocent saint? Booh, and only Kurt Moll's satanic Inquisitor can match and finally defeat her. This is the opera's first recording in the original Russian (which the singers handle well) and reminds us again how modern the ironist Prokofiev still is.

**NICK KIMBERLEY**

# **MAX ROACH - CLIFFORD BROWN**

*In Concert*

Vega VG 655 65560-2 CD

RECORDED SOME 37 years ago, this music still demonstrates the sterling vitality it had



on the day. At the time Roach had persuaded Brown out of New York to the West Coast and the first heady days of Brown-Roach Inc had begun to dawn. Tenor, bass and piano make up the numbers: either Teddy Edwards or Hamid Land, the Georges Bledsoe or Morrow, and Carl Perkins or Richie Powell. All these guys play well, but against the kinetic energy flowing between Roach and Brown they frequently get relegated to supporting roles, however hard they work.

I don't think Brown ever played better; his version of "I Can't Get Started" holds interesting echoes of Bunny Berigan's original version, whilst on the dazzling "Tenderly" or the loosely-swinging "Clifford's Axe" (aka Gershwin's "The Man I Love") he just soars away effortlessly. Roach plays without reserves, pushy and thrilling, at times "Listen

to 'All God's Chillun Got Rhythm'" — shouldering everybody out of the way to get his licks in.

The recording was never good in the original, the transfer to CD has improved it a bit. But then nobody ever bought this music purely for its sound quality. It's all been around in one form or another for a long time, but if you haven't yet got it, now's your chance to buy a slice of history being made.

**JACK COOPER**

# **SONNY SHARROCK BAND**

*Highlife*

Enemy FMY 119-2 CD

# **SONNY SHARROCK AND NICKY SKOPELITIS**

*"Fanth Moves"*

CMP CD 52 CD

AS MUCH as these two CDs, recorded last year, provide a very full picture of the current directions of jazz's most serious, horn-like guitarist, first impressions are curiously disappointing. *Highlife*, for example, featuring Sharrock's new band, is a very uneven affair, the album, on occasions, actually plunging into valleys of soft rock. And on the multi-tracked duo recording produced by Bill Laswell and his long-standing associate Skopelitis, a multi-faceted string player who has worked with musicians as diverse as L Shankar and Bootsie Collins, the sonic backdrop often washes over you with an almost New Age impenetrability.

Yet, as always, Sharrock's guitar soars aloft. Sharrock has one of the most beguilingly horizontal sounds in jazz. Sure, when he lets rip, colossal shards of sound fly off, but mostly his sound is long, flat, warm and penetrating. Its weight and breadth encompass sounds ranging from bagpipe swirls to thrash distortions and the scrummed colours of the East.

Consequently, the best tracks from the two CDs are those on which he really lets go. The cleverly-titled "Chumpy" on *Highlife* shows the advanced Sharrock band at its absolute best, the busy rhythmic underlay of double drums, bass and synth being the perfect foil to Sharrock's swipes, slurs and smeas. And on "Fanth Moves", the electro-acoustic pairing sparks the tallest flames

when they abandon the sarar and baglama world beats and rely on turbulence alone. "The Pyre", for example, is so dark and murky that it could easily pass as an arcane techno-score to a film by Lynch, Cronenberg or Ridley Scott. It's certainly a very different experience to much of *Highlife*, the feel of which may prove too perversely AOR for hardcore Sharrock fans. Go for the duo album; "Faith More", it would seem, in mysterious ways. **PHILIP WATSON**

# ETHEL SMYTH

*Mass In D*

Virgin Classics VC 7 91188 2

A few confidential lapses by Virginia Woolf and one hilarious spoof by Henry Reed have conspired to lend Ethel Smyth the doggedly unserious reputation acquired by those who take themselves very seriously indeed. In person, she fell rather too readily into a stereotype compounded of clumpy shoes and men's ties, loud voices and crippling hand-shakes. She was, for all that, an important composer who had fought hard to be allowed to study in Leipzig and Berlin under Herzogenberg. For all her militant suffragism, she never allowed her music – even in the declamatory *March Of The Women* (also included here) – to become a mere vehicle.

When in 1920, 27 years after its London premiere, Smyth looked again at the score of the *Mass In D*, she decided that it was the best work she had written. That quite valid judgement explains and partly excuses the comic enthusiasm with which she battered and shouted her way through a piano reduction of the score for the edification of Queen Victoria and the exiled Empress Eugenie (who was Smyth's patron). The opening "Kyrie" has a gorgeously naive quality heightened rather than spoiled by the slightly mustered singing of the Plymouth Festival Chorus. Eiddwen Harthy's soprano has an unschooled immediacy that is better suited to Smyth's rhythm – and to the unexpected cadences of the CD's other collapses, "Mrs Waters's Aria", from *The Boatman's Mate* – than a more legitimate delivery.

*The Boatman's Mate* wasn't Smyth's best opera. That was certainly *The Wreckers*, a work originally written in French, whose overture is perhaps her only regularly per-

formed work today. Mrs Waters's musings, "What if I were young again", are remarkably moving, and Smyth's text has a startling lyricism – "Overboard a ruffled pine sings like the sea, / a star from the bright sky falling / the desire of our young hearts calling" – which navigates a course well away from the rocks of sentimentality. Improbable as it may sound, this is one of the year's most interesting and worthwhile releases. Give it a shot

**BRIAN HURTON**

# CECIL TAYLOR

*Looking (Berlin Version) Corvus*

FMP 31 CD

*Chinampas*

Leo LR 155 CD



CORVUS was recorded during the 1989 Berlin Total Music Meeting, the FMP label's annual gala for improvisers. It features Taylor performing alongside drummer Tony Oxley and a string trio of Harold Kimmig, Munier Abdul Fatah and William Parker. The music runs for over 70 minutes and is demanding in the manner of all Taylor's group recitals, physically, emotionally, intellectually, upon participants and observers alike.

The performance is dominated by the exhaustive and exhausting hour-long opening movement with two shorter pieces acting as palliatives to this clamorous, remorseless work. Throughout everyone appears to play for almost all of the time. Taylor's piano is in its usual state of agitated suspension between the percussive and the chromatic, the atonal

and the lyric, but any organizing principles at work initially locate Kimmig's violin as the 'lead' instrument, see-sawing wildly in the upper registers like a young Michael Sampson. Underneath, Parker's bass is its usual, constant, near subliminal presence, buttressing the metallic clatter generated by Oxley's drums.

Munier's cello is the music's most ambivalent element, if only because for much of the time you can't actually hear him play (a perennial problem for the less vociferous members of Taylor's groups – refer back to Siroe and Alan Silva). When he does thread a way through the ensemble his lines are urgent and abstract, his tone harsh and serrated.

On *Looking* five worlds move in one orbit. They create group music in the best sense, selfless, mutually supportive, organic. *Chinampas* is Taylor alone with his voice, poetry and various items of percussion. It's a reissue of an earlier vaguely neoclassical LP release, although the basic technique involved, subjecting language to improvisation via the distortion and manipulation of the speaker's vocal chords, does have its precedents within Taylor's own cultural tradition, Joseph Jarman's numerous performances of "Non-Cognitive Aspects Of The City", for instance. Like Jarman, Taylor has a rapt, elastic vocal voice, utterly compelling to listen to, and his use of percussion to punctuate the rather shamanistic texts is full of sensitive touches and timing.

"Pn – pn – pn, potta – potta," as Kurt Schwitters might have said

**TONY HERRINGTON**

# SONNY TERRY AND BROWNE MCGHEE

*Hometown Blues*

Masterdisc MD 902 CD

THIS COLLECTION comes from two sessions recorded in New York in 1948 and 1951 and presents Sonny Terry and Browne McGhee in two very distinct settings. Twelve of the 18 songs find them in an unusually raucous mood, with Browne McGhee playing electric guitar and an exuberant band bashing out aggressive urban boogie. It's bawdier stuff and very different from the six acoustic cuts that would get lost in the racket were



they not so wonderfully assured.

Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee had been playing together for ten years or so when this music was recorded and their affinity shines through, especially when they are playing together unaccompanied. "Stranger Blues" is a fine example of their empathy, with Terry's coaxing harmonica weaving around and inside McGhee's smooth acoustic guitar and their voices harmonising naturally together. "Sitting On Top Of The World" is just as good, and "Going Down Slow", a song too often perfunctorily performed by blues artists, is here given the respect and sensitivity it deserves. Annoyingly, it is cut prematurely at the end, as if the tape ran out in the studio.

By contrast the songs performed with the band are reckless and unrestrained. The pair were obviously in no mood to stretch themselves creatively, just intent on having a rocking good time. The charm of Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee has always been their calm and folksy approach, but on these songs it's an uplifting thing to hear them raise their voices and rock it up. These are all stirring performances but it's "Key To The Highway", the William Broonzy classic, that stands out. It's a song they must have played a thousand times, but here, like most everything else on this collection, it has more life than ever.

BRIAN A. FOREMAN

### 3MUSTAPHAS

*Friend, Friends & Friends! The Grated Hats Of Mustapha*

Globeville ORB 070 CD

THE MUSTAPHAS' half-funny stage-patter puts off exactly the audience they have every right to expect, in the UK. In Europe and the world, where it doesn't quite work, it works fine: before the wall fell, they were Berlin's favourite pop group, on both sides, in all communities.

By playing the misplaced person – the rootless 20th century cosmopolitan – as befuddled comedy (all translation is mistranslation), they court misinterpretation. But – like esperanto, simultaneously comical and utopian – they leave behind the taint of exotic folk tourism, of ethno-musical holidays in someone else's misery, and break

far beyond self-righteous ethnic purism. The intention has always been: call up outsider epiphany anywhere, to affirm foreign strangeness as a liberation move, an exchange, a connection, a discussion: to argue that beauty can be transmitted beyond closed-off roots communities, can transcend any Balkanised *us-and-them*. They aren't from anywhere other than "elsewhere".

Daoudi, Naiveti and Kemal in particular are genuinely learned improv virtuosos, on reeds, bagpipes/flutes and accordions respectively, and though cousin Lavra had more stagecraft, Sabah Habis is turning into one of the great interpreters of songs-without-words (which, if the words are by turns Japanese, Greek, Arabic, Serbian etc, most 3M3-songs are, except to the absurdly polyglot).

MARK SINKER



### MCCOY TYNER

*Remembering John*

Ergo 6080 CD/MC

TYNER is always liable to turn in a seriously heavy performance, and sometimes has attempted this with material too slight to carry it. Here, not only the premise is suitable but the quality of the actual songs is excellent.

Without overlapping previous Trane tributes he's been involved in, McCoy has chosen six interestingly different Coltrane compositions, plus a Monk (how appropriate) and a couple of standards. Did Trane ever play "Good Morning Heartache"? – I doubt it, but it works in the context. In fact the well-made trio album (by analogy with "the well-made novel") makes a comeback here,

thanks to contrasts of length and speed between "One And Four" (or the somewhat related "India") and the headlong "Pursuance". "Giant Steps" is the shortest version in a good while, and the longest track is the closing "Wise One"; for a moment, you miss Trane's extraordinary entrance on the original, but Tyner soon makes it his own.

Perhaps it's this variety of programming that highlights the pianist's emotional breadth. Surprisingly, in view of my opening, some of his work on this album is almost light (though definitely not "lite"), and it's good to hear this side of him again. I'm less sure about Avery Sharpe, whose occasional slapped bass gets a bit wearing on "Up 'Gaint The Wall", but his backing (with drummer Aaron Scott) is unflamboyantly right. You may say McCoy is a known quantity, but this is one of his best recent outings.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

### BUNNY WAILER

*Marketplace*

Shanachie 43071 CD

THE FIRST line on the opening track of this LP, "Stay With The Reggae", claims: "They got the man who shot the sheriff, but they got to let the music play . . .", which suggests Bunny Wailer entertains suspicions regarding his erstwhile partner's demise. Regrettably, this is not a line of inquiry he follows any further here, though its qualifying clause is pretty much what the rest of the album is all about.

Originally released on the singer's own Sotomonic label at the height of the dancehall vogue in the mid-80s and now issued on compact disc by US label Shanachie, *Marketplace* seemingly takes its inspiration, if not its musical form, from the current scene's ramifications, with a series of eulogies such as "Stay With The Reggae", "Jump Jump", "Dance Hall Music", "Dance The Night Away" and "Cool And Deadly", the latter title a dancehall catchphrase in popular usage among reggae artists a generation or so younger than the venerable Mr Wailer.

Despite this pursuit for contemporary relevance, Wailer avoids the funk and digital excesses which mar some of his later work, even if much of the set seems barely more than an easygoing exercise in characteristic style.

There is a touch of mento in the man's music, exemplified here on the aforementioned "Cool And Deadly", which borrows from the traditional Jamaican ring tune "Galloway Road" aka "Emanuel Road". But for all its pleasant charm, the LP seems a long way from Bunny leading the Waiters on inspirational titles like "He Who Feels It Knows It" and "I Stand Predominate" or powerful early solo efforts such as "Battering Down Sentence".

PENNY REEL

## TOM WAITS

### *The Early Years*

Edel ED 332 CD

WELL, ONE early year. 1971. These recordings are on licence from Bizarre/Straight which, not too long before, under the supervision of Frank Zappa, gave us the debut double-album by the incomparable Larry "Wild Man" Fischer, fresh from the sidewalks of Sunset Strip. Maybe, if he had been emotionally more resilient, Wild Man's imagination might have created the kind of word-world that Waits was to spin into focus with his 80s classics.

These 13 tracks date from July to December and were cut in Los Angeles. Waits's corner of Angelopolis is not, of course, very close to the generous streets down which Harris K. Telemacher goes. Twenty years back the neighbourhood the lyrics described was already less than genteel, but lacked the surreal luridness of 8th and Hennepin, Union Square, Gun Street, Midtown or Singapore. Though the atmosphere is often crepuscular and seedy the language of these early Waits compositions is largely straightforward and penetrable, but strong hints of the mature style are to be heard in numbers like "Ice Cream Man" and "Virginia Avenue".

The voice was clearer, lighter then, wiseful, not yet affecting the effects of abuse by bourbon, Lucky Strikes and cult status. The style hangs around the vicinities of laidback barrelhouse, country blues, and late-nite bar-room laments. For those whose palate is insufficiently discerning to appreciate the later albums this collection could be a pleasant revelation. For the rest of us it's an extremely welcome rounding out of the Waits canon.

BARRY WITHERDEN

## CRYSTAL WATERS

### *Crystal Waters*

ARM Polygram 397 151 CD/MC/LP

AFFECTING DEBUT from the Washington-born singer whose *Tap Of The Pop* appearance showed up Kylie Minogue and Cathy Dennis for the trivial pinup poop they are. "Gypsy Woman (La Da Dee)" is a song about the homeless — the DJ did not know where to look!

The seven-inch version — the "Strip To The Bone Mix", with its delightful combination of Hammond grind and bare-bones techno — is here, along with a "Radio" mix that adds in nervous string samples. "Surprise" and "Makin' Happy" and "Good Lovin'" have the cool clipped bass pioneered by original Chicago house, conga and fretless



bass samples fused into an irresistible bubbling — sly, melodic, hip. Jamaaladeen Tacuma is the only realtime player who can equal this kind of dancefloor heaven.

Baltimore's Basement Boys production team kept the music tough and simple, bright tambourine samples chipping over tenebrous keyboards and the ever-popping bass. The big arrangements and backing choirs needed to disguise the failings of run-of-the-mill pop voices are not needed here: "Deepest Of Hearts" is just voice and percussion, vocal exposure not heard since Jay Williams's "Sweat".

Like all great singers, Crystal Waters introduces a new voice: throwaway, hurt, strangled, flat, almost asthmatic — brilliant. Nellie Luther meets Cleveland Warkiss.

BEN WATSON

## DR MICHAEL WHITE

### *Crescent City Serenade*

Amiles 422-848 545 CD/MC

WHITE is a youngish scholar and clarinetist and proselytizer on behalf of authentic New Orleans jazz. Which puts us in a difficulty at the start. What's authentic? In this set of mostly old tunes, compositions by Jelly Roll Morton and Sam Morgan and Armand Piron and other venerables of jazz heritage, White directs what he hopes is a rousing, accurately-inflected recital that celebrates the old repertory.

Some of the time it certainly does. I'd pick out the slow, concentrated quartet performance "Blues To Becher", a nicely jaunty reading of Morgan's "Bogalusa Strut" and a pert "Shreveport Stomp" as moments where everything works out right. But there's a lot that's less convincing. White's band mixes young musicians and old hands — the latter including Teddy Riley on trumpet, and the best soloist here, the gritty, uproarious trombonist Freddie Lonzo — but some of them sound more at home than others. Reginald Veal's bass sounds too remote in the mix, and Herlin Riley's drums are OK, but these guys swing by numbers. It's an accurate recreation of the city's steady pulse, but recreation is the word. Winton Marsalis, who hovers like a benign patron over the whole thing, plays on three tracks, and his corner solo on "Careless Love" sounds like a grotesque piece of slumming, a caricature of New Orleans playing.

White himself is inconsistent. His title piece is merely lugubrious; his "Winin' Boy Blues" is too slow. He plays the traditional solo on "High Society" quite well but there's a terrible fluff at bar 39. The band's treatment of "Nobody Knows The Way I Feel This Morning" is clearly based on Sidney Becher's Victor recording, and sounds second-hand rather than revisionist.

There is a spiritedness to it all, and I don't like to be childish when the idea of the record is a lot more interesting than most of the neo-trad we get from modern mainstreamers. I think anyone who buys it will find much to enjoy. But White needs to either go at it with even more commitment to 'traditional' playing, or turn to a new New Orleans in earnest.

RICHARD COOK



# FASTLINKS



Barry Witherden steps out with a new batch of toe-tappers

**TONY COE** LES VOIX D'ITXASSOU (*Nato VG 651-600 300 CD*). Coe has put together a suite of settings of poems and songs from nationalist and liberation movements throughout the world. The idea may sound like Carla Bley and Charlie Haden's *Liberation Music* and *Ballad Of The Fallen*, but the music doesn't. The words are spoken or sung by talents as diverse as Françoise Fabian, Maggie Bell, Marianne Faithfull, Ali Farka Touré and Maria Arger and the 18-piece orchestra includes Ray Warleigh, Alexander Balanescu, Malcolm Griffiths, and Chris Laurence. I notice that the record stores are, perforce, filing it under jazz, but it isn't, nor is it classical or world music, though it contains elements of all of these. It's just very good. And frequently very moving

**NAT KING COLE & BUDDY RICH** ANATOMY OF A JAM SESSION (*Black Lion BLCD760137 CD*). This has been out often enough before but is always welcome. From 1939 Nat Cole's tight, nimbly trio set a high standard, Cole's piano style an elegant bridge between swing and bop, paralleling Earl Hines and influencing, *inter alia*, Oscar Peterson. Here producer Eddie Laguna teamed Cole with the equally late, great and first-rate trumpeter Charlie Shavers (who early on decides he will rip through any attempts at a relaxed mood) plus bassist John Simmons, tenorist Herbie Haymer (the original leader of the date) and Buddy Rich. I might have selected J.C. Heard or Big Sad Catlett, but it wasn't my record label.

**TOM HARRELL** MOON ALLEY (*Cristi Crist Jazz Crist 1018 LP/CD*). Harrell leads a starry quartet on this reissue of his own-name debut from 1985, with Kennies Garrett and Barron on reeds and keys respectively, Ray Drummond (bass) and Ralph Peterson (drums). All the tunes are Harrell originals except for Garrett's "Change Of Pace" and Bird's "Scapple From The Apple"; the band

is strong, incisive and precise, whilst paying as much attention to shapes and textures as to power. It's commanding, superlative stuff.

**JACKIE MCLEAN** DR JACKLE (*Stephane SCCD 36005 CD*). Another one that's been around a while, but now reissued with an extra track ("Jossa Bossa", faded during a piano solo) on the CD format. The rest of the tunes on this 1966 live session from Baltimore are standard items in McLean's repertoire ("Little Melonae", "Melody For Melonae", "Closing" and the title track) and the band comprises Lamont Johnson, Scotty Holt and the splendid Billy Higgins. If you notice how rough the sound quality is you're not listening to the music properly. McLean has always been one of my alto heroes, and



the early 60s were the finest period in a distinguished recording career that has lasted over 40 years. In April 1966 he was still at melt-down level. Even his second-best efforts can get into your soul and make it better. Insofar as this is primarily just a blowing session, omitting the exploration of new pastures that characterised *One Step Beyond* or *Destination Out!*, maybe this is second best, but it's better than most people's first best. If this don't blister yer viscera I just don't know.

**TAJ MAHAL** LIKE NEVER BEFORE (*Private Music 261 679 CD*). Taj used to work his way through the genres from album to album. *Recycle The Blues* (And Other Related Stuff) remains one of, if not the, finest

modern examinations of country and acoustic blues. On *Luke Never Before* Taj continues to draw on blues, soul, reggae and other Caribbean traditions. He includes entertaining new songs and revisits some he has recorded before in the company of a galaxy of talent including, for arbitrary example, Howard Johnson, the Pointer Sisters, Hiram Bullock, Paul Barrere and Dr John. Listen to "Squat That Rabbit" for an example of how the blues can still come up sounding fresh, exhilarating and different.

**PINO MINAFRA/ERNST REJSEGER/HAN BENNINK** NOCI... STRANI FRUTTI (*Les LR 176 CD*). Recorded at the Europa Festival at Noci in Puglia on 14 July 1990, this is a major contrast, but it has in common with Taj's music a certain wry humour, a certain twinkle in the eye. Most of the times I've heard Minafra have been in a more structured context. Not that this is seriously abstract. Minafra's trumpet is in the tradition that derives from Don Cherry, dancing phrases sputtered out, burnished and bright. Bennink's "drums, percussion, voice and other things" are as gimlet-eyed as ever. Recommended.

**MARK MURPHY** WHAT A WAY TO GO (*Mase 5419 MC/CD*). Archive time again: I remember first hearing Murphy on the Light Programme when he was one of the many non-pop musicians to do an album of Lennon & McCartney songs and probably the only one not to make an embarrassing dog's breakfast of it. I lost track of Murphy for nearly 20 years (and he probably didn't know what I was up to either) but when I heard him again the voice and style were as good as ever. This is not the kind of thing I would normally listen to, but Murphy is one of those artists, like Mel Tormé, who crosses the boundaries because of their sheer musicianship.

**VALENTINA PONOMAREVA** LIVE IN JAPAN (*Les LR 175 CD*). Ponomareva is accompanied (in the sense of travelling with, rather than providing a subsidiary contribution) by an international collection of musical rude boys, including Vladimir Chekasin, John





Zorn, Bill Laswell and Kazutoki Umezu. This is group music of a corrosive, intense, flamboyant kind, six episodes from three concerts in Tokyo and Osaka. You'll have fun picking the bones out of this.

**OTIS RUSH** *LOST IN THE BLUES* (Some SNTCD 1045 CD). Recorded in 1977 in Stockholm by celebrated bluesologist Sam Charters, piano and organ parts by Lucky Peterson have been added for this re-issue. This is not vandalism, though: apparently Peterson is Rush's favourite keyboards player and Rush had originally wanted a pianist on the session. The usual warhorses – "I Can't Quit You Baby", "All Your Love (I Miss Lovin')" and so on – are absent, Otis digging into the Jimmy Reed, Willie Dixon, B B King and Albert King songbooks. Rush tends to get overlooked in favour of superstars like King and Cray, but if this is just plain blues it's fine by me

**ALFRED SCHNITTKE** *THE ALFRED SCHNITTKE EDITION VOLUME 7* (BIS CD-487); *VOLUME 9* (BIS CD-507). Schnittke's is still far from a household name, and BIS are to be congratulated on this project. On these instalments we get violin concertos numbers 1 & 2, played by Mark Lubotsky with the Malmö Symphony Orchestra under Eni Kias (vol 7) and three works for cello (*Concerto No 1*, *Klingende Bachtalen* (*Sounding Letters*) and *Hymns*, played by Tarleif Thedeen with the Danish National Radio Orchestra under Leif Segerstam) on volume 9. Schnittke is somewhat dismissive about the first violin concerto, feeling it to be stuck in a Russian late-Romantic world, but he considers it to be worth keeping for its hint of future developments. To my ears it has sufficient merit to survive in its own right – its main subjects have a stark grandeur, with melodic shapes that are sophisticated without being elaborate – but the later works are a different proposition, acknowledging elements of music that Soviet composers were for a long time expected to ignore.

**HEINRICH SCHUTZ** *PSALM DAVIDS* (*Confiteor MC/CD MFC/CD CF 190*). These Psalm settings were the fruits of Schutz's studies

with Gabrieli and, although the Veneran influence is still discernible, the development towards the more severe German style is evident. The blazing colours of the Italian composers are already being replaced by the more sombre, if equally rich, hues of the German taste, with a textural clarity made possible by the less elaborate decoration. Performed impeccably by the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge and His Majesty's Sagbuts and Cornets directed by Richard Marlow and Jeremy West, these are the first mature pieces by a seminal figure in the evolution of European music.

**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH** *SYMPHONY NO 12: THE YEAR 1917; HAMLET, THE AGE OF GOLD* (DG 431 688 CD); *CHAMBER SYM-*



*PHONY & SCHONBERG, VERKLÄRT NACHT* (Dolphin CD 0001 CD). Shostakovich's memoirs gave us a portrait of a man made cynical and bitter by the treatment he received from the state arbiters of artistic taste, but it's more than just hindsight that lets us hear the irony, the mocking hollowiness in the heroic, martial tunes in several of his works. There is a bleakness even in the midst of the pomp and rhetoric of his enforced Socialist Realism. It is rather distressing to contemplate what he could have produced in a less oppressive (at least, less directly, more subtly oppressive) culture. It is all too easy (and all too erroneous) to dismiss Shostakovich's best-known orchestral works as populist, but as these recordings remind us, there are complexities of wit and meaning still to be explored in all of his music. His string

quartets (the *Chamber Symphony* is adapted from the eighth quartet) remain amongst the best in the literature. Schönberg's "Verklärte Nacht" dates from 1899 as a string sextet and was orchestrated in 1917. Still inhabiting late-Romantic/Expressionist territory, it nonetheless avoids the putrescent ripeness of Wagner, Richard Strauss and other early works by Schönberg which seemed to make the move towards atonality and serialism so necessary. The DG recording features the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Jarvi, whilst the Kreissler String Orchestra is heard on the Dolphin issue.

**ANTONIO VIVALDI** *VARIOUS CONCERTOS* (Sany SK 46 556 CD). Although he wrote some 600 concertos Vivaldi is generally known for four only. Despite the high-profile of *Le Quattro Stagioni* (*The Four Seasons*), and good as they are, he remains an underrated and underexposed composer. We should not forget his many other fine works, such as *Nisi Dominus* (*Unless The Lord*), *L'Estro Armonico* (*The Harmonious Inspiration*) or *Il Pastor Fido* (*The Vicar's Dog*). (I think you're barking at the wrong tree – Ed.) On this release the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra performs seven concertos for violin, mandolins, lute, viola d'amore and permutations of these, transcribed where necessary for the guitars of John Williams and Benjamin Vedder. The viola d'amore parts are played by Norbert Blum on the intended instrument. The performances have just the right tone and atmosphere, meticulous without being fastidious.

**TREVOR WATTS'S MOIRE MUSIC DRUM ORCHESTRA** *LIVE IN LATIN AMERICA VOLUME 1* (ARC CD06). Yet another excellent record. The original Moiré Music band imported several devices common in Minimalism, but the Drum Orchestra goes straight to oge of the major inspirations of Minimalist composers, the African percussion ensemble. Watts flouts his bright, piercing alto and soprano over bass guitar, drum kit and four African percussionists, Nana Tsiboe, Jojo Yates, Nana Appah and Nee-Daku Patato, who create rhythmic patterns which are sometimes delicate and subtle, sometimes relentless and insistent, and frequently all of these things. Recommended.



## OUTLINES I

### JOHN CAGE & MORTON FELDMAN

*New American composition. Graham Lack takes a chance with Cage and admires Feldman's not finish*

I ASKED the *I Ching* to comment in its use as a compositional aid by John Cage. Its response was the hexagram *Li*, or Treading. "Treading upon the tail of the tiger. It does not bite the man. Success."

OK, I guess you could say that Cage took a tiger by the tail and has done pretty well out of it. But what about the new two-CD Cage collection, **Music For Five**, on hat ART?

Hexagram *Ta Ya*, or Possession In Great Measure, replied the *I Ching*, handing down a very favourable judgement: "strength and clarity unite... power is expressing itself in a graceful and controlled way".

Do I detect a little oracular bias here? The *I Ching* seems to have had as much to do with this music as Cage himself. The main composition on each disc (it's performed in English on disc one, in German on disc two) is 45' (for a speaker), performed here simultaneously with compositions 34' 46.776" and 31' 57.9864" (each for a pianist), 27' 10.554" (for a percussionist) and 26' 1.1499" (for a string player, here cellist), in most or all of which pieces Cage used *I Ching*-derived chance operations to determine their structures.

So what you get are two sets of random notes and noises, occurring at a more rapid rate than is usual with Cage because the five pieces are running at the same time. You also get an electronic version of 4' 33" (white noise instead of silence) and two recent pieces, *For Two* (1984) and the curious *Music For Five* (1984-7), which apparently consists of a Stockhausen-like instruction for the musicians "to approach the condition of orchestra". If you're looking for a handy sampler of Cage's music, this is probably a good place to start; personally, I found much of it rather, well, indeterminate, as in neither here nor there.

Hexagram *K'un*, the Receptive, comes the *I Ching*'s angry riposte: "Quiet perseverance brings good fortune." So perhaps I should

stick at it? I certainly enjoyed **Singing Through** (New Albion), a collection of Cage's vocal works sung by Joan La Barbara, with occasional accompaniment by percussion, piano, electronics and — pile-driver! The songs are mostly brief, without conventional lyrics and often very beautiful, thanks in no small part to La Barbara's exquisite soprano. Several of the texts are mesostics, others derive from such favourite Cage authors as Joyce and Thoreau. There's no info on how the music was composed but settings vary from the relatively traditional 'The Wonderful Widow Of Eighteen Springs' to the dramatic outbursts of 'Nrowth Upon Nachr' to the hilarious 'Solo For Voice 67', sung entirely in falsetto and grunts. These songs may not count as major items in the Cage canon, but they sound as if he had fun making them.



Cage also features in the Abel/Steinberg/Winnant Trio's **Set Of Five** (New Albion), a collection of small pieces by five composers with West Coast connections. Cage's just-post-war 'Nocturne' is the delicate prelude to a fine set that ranges from the scampering piano/dramatic cymbal crashes of Alan Hovhanness's 'Invocations To Vahagn' to Somei Sarah's rapurous, slo-mo 'Toki No Hon'. Or try Henry Cowell's rich array of percussion on his 'Set Of Five': gongs, tablas, bowls, xylophone, glockenspiel — but no pile-driver!

I asked the *I Ching* for a comment on the music of Cage's close friend Morton Feldman, who died in 1987. It gave me the hexagram *Chun*, Gradual Progress: "Gentleness that is adaptable, but at the same time penetrating, is the outer form that should

proceed from inner calm." Voilà, synchronicity! Because what should I find in the notes to Feldman's piano/violin duo **For John Cage** (CPA/Albany) but violinist Paul Zukovsky's remark that "I usually give a very short speech before starting this piece, saying that it is approximately 75 minutes long, very quiet, calm, it will take as long as it is going to take; relax, let it happen".

That advice holds good for nearly all of Feldman's later works, including two other new releases, both on hat ART: the solo piano **For Bunita Marcus** and the two-CD set **Why Patterns? Crippled Symmetry** for three musicians — flutes, piano/celesta, glockenspiel/vibraphone. In his notes to the latter set, Feldman draws analogies both with the paintings of Mark Rothko (you could say his music "floats in space" like the colour-blocks on Rothko's canvases) and with Near and Middle Eastern rug-making processes, apparently a great influence on his later music, in which the symmetry of the overall form is "crippled" by minute variations in the execution of the details. He goes on to relate this to time, memory and his use of asymmetrical patterns in which, he says, the regularity gives "a suggestion that what we hear is functional and directional, but we soon realise that this is an illusion". Or as Cage puts it in 45', "the feeling we are getting nowhere/that is a pleasure/which will continue".

Feldman's compositions seem to be a personal synthesis of systems and intuitions, but, like Cage, he is wary of intention, of "meddling". (He reports that Stockhausen once asked him for his "secret": "I don't push the sounds around," he replied.) So there are no emotional messages, no goals in this music: just patterns, repeated, extended, slightly varied, played against each other, occasionally synchronised. An aural mandala.

*Why Patterns? Crippled Symmetry* is my favourite of these CDs because I like the mix of instrumental colours and because, with three musicians, the crisscross patterns work a strange hypnosis, wafting you away in a reverie. Feldman's sound-rug becomes a magic carpet ride. Listen to it late at night and you'll fall asleep relaxed and smiling.

And a final message from the *I Ching*? Hexagram *Ta Ch'ü*, The Taming Power Of The Great: "the superior man acquaints himself with many sayings of antiquity".

## OUTLINES 2

### GOSPEL

New gospel – but, blue and rock. Nick Kimberley feels the spirit on the latest releases

"GOD DON'T like it!" bellows the Reverend Anderson Johnson on the anthology **Get Right With God** (Gospel Heritage), and although his ecstatic, high-pitched exclamation is supposed to lead us along the gospel road to salvation, it may also pinpoint the reason for so many people's resistance to the musical allure of Hot Gospel (the subtitle of this collection). For unrepentant disbelievers, the gospel message sticks too closely to the Thou Shalt Not's of school-taught religion.

But that message doesn't reside solely in the verbal sense of the words. A gospel singer worth his or her salt will extend, perhaps even subvert the lyric with a lexicon of slurs, glides, whoops and hesitations that derive from the very ecstasy which orthodox Christianity seeks to suppress. No musical form – not even opera – uses the voice to more expressive ends, and *Get Right With God* is the perfect demonstration of gospel's range. The Reverend Johnson may warn us about the perils of moonshine, adulterous sex and skirts both too short and too long, but the joy in his voice, prodded by some slide guitar that a devil's disciple like Robert Johnson would have been proud of, offers pleasures no less carnal.

*Get Right With God* is in fact a reissue of most of two LPs which sparked a small flurry of gospel reissues in the early 80s. It's hard to imagine a better constructed, more exciting guide to the proliferation of gospel styles between the 1940s and the 1970s. Preachers; itinerant sermonisers whose style harks back three or four decades; quartets who could pledge their allegiance to God at one session, then cross town to record some profane doowop later that same day; pastors who whipped their flocks to a frenzy with a few well-placed gasps for breath: they're all here.

There's a fascinating comparison with **Preachin' The Gospel: Holy** (Columbia), a well-documented collection of tracks recorded between 1927 and 1936, with two rogue tracks by Sister O M Terrell (also on

*Get Right With God*) that, although recorded in 1953, sound like the most downhome of prewar blues. As its title suggests, the anthology is dominated by singers whose music is blues in all but name: Terrell, Willie Johnson, Josh White. You also get the Blue Chips, a jazzy vocal group prodded along by a clarinet which looks all the way forward to rock'n'roll; the distinctly *not* generic Washington Phillips, whose strict morality tales are undercut by an endearing voice and dolcicola accompaniment, and more preachers, including Elder Charlie Beck, whose "Drinking Shine" is the starting point from which Rev Johnson's "God Don't Like It" took off nearly a quarter of a century later.

Of all gospel genres, preaching is the one that most deters the irreligious, but it is arguably the most important. A talented



sermoniser like Beck or Johnson uses Biblical wisdom as a mirror to the modern world. The sense of rimings and the vocal mannerisms which embellish the merely verbal message show a Ciceronian feel for the orator's art. Martin Luther King's sermons were no more eloquent than Elder Beck's in their appeal to black pride.

Based in Los Angeles, Specialty was one of the major gospel labels of the 40s and 50s. In the early-70s, the label began to repack-age its history for the older market, and several gospel albums appeared. Now Ace Records has the European rights and, rather than attempt to present Specialty gospel in a new form, has opted simply to re-release the music as it appeared in the 70s – a lost opportunity. Still there is some remarkable music, none more so than on the Swan

Silvertones' **My Rock/Love Lifted Me** (to its credit, Ace has made one CD out of what used to be two vinyl LPs). The Swans were a pivotal group in the 50s, their two lead singers an object lesson in how to play contrasting voices against each other. Here, Solomon Womack's hard and hoarse passion clears the way for the more detached falsetto of Claude Jeter, while tenor, bass and baritone burble their intricate harmonies. Jeter in particular is astonishing, his high delirium providing a model for a whole generation of soul singers.

The Five Blind Boys of Alabama mocked the same two-lead style, but Clarence Fountain and the Reverend Samuel K Lewis were not as distinctive as Jeter and Womack, even if they tore up perhaps even more audiences than the Swans. To these ears, the screams and whoops are too mannered, lacking the apparent spontaneity of truly great gospel groups (needless to say, such spontaneity requires the utmost discipline). If half of the tracks on **Stand By Me/Marching Up To Zion** (Ace) had been spliced with the best dozen tracks on **The Best Of Dorothy Love Coates And The Harmonettes**, Ace would have given us a superlative anthology. As it is, we have two very valuable retrospectives that few will want to play from beginning to end. Coates is another in the long line of stentorian female leads who have given gospel its most visible face. Out of context, her voice might sound forced, but with the Harmonettes behind her, she could decorate the most familiar lines with grace and imagination.

You can hear gospel power at its starkest on "A Soldier's Plea" from **The Best Of The Pilgrim Travellers** (Ace) in which the understated emotion of the two leads is screwed to fever pitch by the simple humming of the harmonising voices. The immensely moving acapella of the Travellers is a million miles from the over-elaborations of Marion Williams on **Strong Again** (Spirit Feel), which shows how far contemporary gospel has moved from the simplicity of its postwar Golden Age. Williams's voice still has an awesome power, but hardly a note escapes without embellishment, while the cluttered instrumentation rushes to fill the few contemplative moments with busy riffs and repetitions. This is rococo gospel, a triumph of style over form.

Prince continued from page 41

"Junior (bass-player Levi) rumble, Minneapolis style". Or general reworking calls instruct – "put the snare in", "turn that organ down" etc. And in a live "Still Would Stand All Time", he shouts "What fool's singing 'will'? It's 'would'!" "Still Would Stand All Time!"

Jimmy Jam, keyboardist with the Prince-produced The Time and himself Minneapolis-based producer of the likes of Janet Jackson, described in *Musician* magazine Prince's demands on a band. Insisting on the creation of a part for the right hand in the bass line of the keyboards, Prince would say, "No hands can be lazy". After more rehearsal to accommodate this he would return and say, "OK, who's not singing? Everybody's got to have a harmony part." More rehearsal would follow, then he would follow with, "OK, where's the choreography? You guys got to be steppin'!"

"A couple of *hard* rehearsals later," Jam said, "I could do the shit in my sleep."

Most recently we've heard Prince as pop musician. *Batman* was not too successful, with Prince and the movie both failing to achieve the dark side of the Batman philosophy. But if *Batman* was too diffident – perhaps, like the movie, over-carefully produced – then maybe *Graffiti Bridge* was unnecessary. Just as he didn't need to prove any funkiness with *The Black Album*, then he didn't need to prove his New Power philosophy with *Graffiti Bridge*.

"THEY'RE FINALLY getting it," Prince told *Rolling Stone*. Well, yes, but they could hardly fail. Those who had missed the dance toward the apocalypse, love-not-sex, love-through-sex, live-together-free-from-war-and-politicians and finally love-God and don't-do-drugs messages throughout his career had finally had it explained to them.

But as Miles, again, has said, there's always a little more to be heard from Prince. If it wasn't necessarily to be found on the previous two albums, it was evident elsewhere, in remixes and live reworkings. If he's not the leader in the pop world that he was in the 80s and the Minneapolis sound is now – why call on things to remain the same? – dispart, then no worry.

Joni Mitchell has described him as a great assimilator, not innovator. But what's crucial is that he's not a museum musician, playing a 'style' against which his recordings can be judged. He's a live artist, doing his creating in public. Strip away, as saxophonist Eric Leeds said, the imagery, and what you're left with is a great musician. Great stars can be at their best when at their most vulnerable and at their strongest. Michael Jackson's best, for example, is still for me the song and the video "Leave Me Alone". Prince's comes when getting the audience to chant to him "It's alright" during "Forever In My Life". If the movie *Graffiti Bridge* saw him seemingly seeking assurances for his work and aims, then he'll get it from me. There's more to come and plenty already.

It's alright . . . 'salright . . . 'salright.



# subscribe!

. . . have you got soul?



It's a precious commodity. But we can put a little of it your way – if you're a first-time subscriber to *The Wire* this month!

Thanks to the kind auspices of Atlantic Records, we have a boxful of classic 60s soul reissues to GIVE AWAY to those wise and fortunate ones who subscribe to the magazine in August as new recruits to the inner circle of *Wire* people.

Slip on your loafers and stroll over to choose one of these:

## Otis Redding *Otis Blue*

The classic that defined the genre for a generation of mods – and you don't even need a parka!

## Sam And Dave *Hold On, I'm Coming*

Devastating duets from the sharpest double-act in golden soul – cool!

## Booker T And The MG's *Green Onions*

Smokin' instrumental soul from Booker, Cropper and the cats – if you don't dig it, you must be a vegetable!

## Otis Redding And Carla Thomas *The King And Queen*

A right royal encounter between two of the toughest throats in the business – low-down and laryngitic!

Here's what you do: fill in the form with this issue. Write on the back either *Otis Blue*, *Sam And Dave*, *Booker T* or *Otis And Carla*, depending on your choice of record (CD only – sorry, vinyl diehards!) Send it, with the appropriate cheque or credit card number, to **The Wire, Units G&H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN**. Your CD will follow – but please be patient as they have to be ordered up!

This offer closes on Friday 26 July 1991.

**The Wire** \* Green or not, we know our onions.

# the charts

Every month on this page, a selection of **informative, contentious and plain opinionated** statistics from the extraordinary orbit of the world's chart-topping music magazine. Why not send us **your** own current playlist?

## soul best sellers

1. **Good Woman Gladys Knight** (MCA)
2. **Different Lifestyles BeBe & CeCe Winans** (Capitol)
3. **With I Could Find Another Le Rae** (RCA)
4. **Are You Free Marc Candlish** (Perspective)
5. **Can You Stop The Pain Paolo Bryson** (Columbia)
6. **Louis Price Louis Price** (Motown)
7. **Too Sweet Obba Babalundun** (Epic)
8. **Peaceful Journey Heavy D** (MCA)
9. **True Confessions T. C. Ellis** (Paisley Park)
10. **Straight Down To Business Ready For The World** (MCA)

Chart courtesy of Black Market Records, D'Arbury St, London W1

## ten great exclamatory musicians

1. **frank ZAPI-er**
2. **lilly BANG!**
3. **tower of POW!-er**
4. **SPLAT!-ter tris**
5. **sarah re-UGH!-er**
6. **WHAM!**
7. **stanley ex-OUCH!**
8. **hats DUCK!**
9. **george GRUNT!-er**
10. **bobby PHEW!**

Compiled by Mark Exclamationsgibbs

## ten great vans

1. **Luther Vandross**
2. **Ludwig Van Beethoven**
3. **Van Morrison**
4. **Van Halen**
5. **Vangelis**
6. **Van Der Graf Generator**
7. **Dick Van Dyke**
8. **E-Van Parker**
9. **Vincent Van Gogh**
10. **Lorry Anderson**

Compiled by Morris & The Vanablist

## opera best-sellers

1. **Turandot Puccini** (Mehta/Decca)
2. **La Boheme Puccini** (Karajan/Decca)
3. **Le Nozze Di Figaro Mozart** (Solta/Decca)
4. **Porgy & Bess Gershwin** (Rattle/EMI)
5. **Akhmatov Glazunov** (Davies/CBS)
6. **Die Zauberflöte Mozart** (Harcink/EMI)
7. **Madame Butterfly Puccini** (Karajan/Decca)
8. **La Boheme Puccini** (Beecham/EMI)
9. **Fidelio Beethoven** (Klemperer/EMI)
10. **La Traviata Verdi** (Kleiber/DG)

Chart courtesy of the Classical Dogs, HMV, Oxford Circus, London W1





## IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, YOU'RE IN THE WRITE PLACE

WHAT — NO letters page? Is this so there can be NO COMPLAINTS? Well, here's one!

JUDY KEEVES, Norfolk  
*No Jim Beam for you, then — GL.*

## DAMN FINE LETTER

RIGHT. IT'S a Saturday morning. No more philosophy students to hassle me. A week off — messing about on the sax, doing some *serious* reading, being seen in the garden a time or two, playing with the kids, taking it easy! *The Wire* should be here soon, too. Only said to Gill the other day! "*Wire* should be here soon, love..." Seriously! That's how much I look forward to it!

So, I stumble downstairs. The nippers are already up and encooned, pie-eyed, in front of the pap-box. The lady is out taking an art class. Yes, there's a promisingly fat Saturday *Guardian* and, yes, it's come! Face down — Black Bush ad suitably safe-hup — there's the *Wire*.

Now, I'm going to delay this particular piece of gratification. A pot of Earl Grey, swoop salutations with the soles, swoop on the *Wire*. Then...

...the miracle of human perception! In a thousandth of a second I *know* there is something wrong! I'm stunned. I begin to rock rhythmically. The full magnitude of what has happened begins to sink in. *Aaahh! A triumph!*

As you say in the editorial "What the hell is going on here?" Damn right! I reckon that's Michael Jackson creeping out of the cover graphic. It is! What's this? "Music now and all ways?" Sounds like the sort of line I use on the ladies when I'm pretending to be Agent Cooper. With almost terminal trepidation I turn the page. Shit. It's looking bad, serious bad. There's even a review section called — no, this is starting to hurt — "*Wire* Winners!"

I can't take it. It always happens to me. I read a magazine for years, everything's fine. I take out a subscription and there's an immediate and major revamp. Look, I'm getting old. Underneath the 60s radicalism there's a profound strain of conservatism. Don't ask me to accept too much change! Jazz and *Wire* as, primarily, a jazz magazine —



## THE WRITE PLACE

*The winner of our favourite letter wins a delicious bottle of Jim Beam whisky. Send your bruckbats to: Write Place, Wire, Units G&H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN*

allows me to hold on to the hard-earned deviance of my youth. I'm still smarting from *New Society* having gone west...

O K. I'm calmer now. I've had to maintain on full-blast Ayler. On second glance it doesn't look too bad. Alright. I'll try. I'll work at it. But it's going to take publication of this letter (God! Perhaps they don't have the letters anymore... they don't). Well, I'm sending it anyway! and that bottle of booze to get me up off of this 'hard killing floor'!

GEOFF BRIGHT, Sheffield  
*It's a deal. Mr Jim Beam will be calling on you shortly, sir — GL.*

## SOME SAY YES...

I HAVE just taken delivery of the June 1991 issue of *The Wire* — superb.

I must admit to a touch of scepticism as I peeled off the plastic envelope to reveal a computerized image of Michael Jackson — the warning in the last issue of *Wire* had prepared me for the magazine's "dramatic... distinctive... different" new-look and I did seriously doubt whether a journal of *Wire*'s hitherto integrity and excellence could really mix Michael Jackson with Mozart, and Abdullah Ibrahim with Elvis Costello, as promised — but, as I hoped, you have proved me wrong.

The new *The Wire* is an outstanding read.  
SIMON MAY, London

MAY I say also how pleasing I find your new(ish) format. I have actually been reading *Wire* right from the beginning — seems like a

long time now — and in the last few years definitely felt you had rather sacrificed content in favour of style. I must say I had been finding recent issues a bit thin (the article on Moondog being a real exception!)

The current issue by comparison seems busy and alive, informative and interesting. A genuine pleasure. Best wishes for the future.

GREG PICKERSGILL, London

## SOME SAY...

CRAP, CRAP, crap, crap, crap. What else is there to say?

MICHAEL HREHENIAK, Stanmore  
*Well, some of our readers are a little more articulate...*

FIRSTLY, I'M writing to say thank you very much for the excellent Moondog article — a fine example of *Wire* at its best, pointing the way towards musics and musicians unknown.

But secondly, I'm sorry to say, I'm writing out of sadness at reading the new-look *The Wire*. I don't think it's that I always wanted you to stay the same (although I acknowledge a strange kind of conservatism can develop when, as Roland Barthes comments in one of June's reviews, "In Britain the most worthwhile things are endangered"). It's just that what has always made *The Wire* so vital is its coverage of stuff that is both musically exciting and will not get proper acknowledgement or assessment anywhere else. When so much exciting stuff is so unsung it feels vaguely criminal to use up so much space on new records from Elvis Costello and David Byrne... even though you do include fine pieces on Abdullah Ibrahim, Mozart and Michael Jackson.

PAT TAYLOR, Hackney

## SOME SAY, YES!!!

YOUNG EVEN decided to include a paragraph advertising a tour by the reformed rock band Yes, and "are happy to inform us that "Atlantic are planning to release a major retrospective of their music in July". Major! By what criteria? By none that I note *Wire* would recognise as artistically valid. It sickens me to think that information about creative musicians was omitted to make room for this plug for overpaid parveys of pretentious populist dross.

G M PATERSON, York



Michael Jackson dictates a letter to the *Wire*: Place Salmon on the cover." Photo by Jill Furmanovsky

#### A SMALL STEP FOR A MAGAZINE, BUT FOR MANKIND . . .

GIANT STEPS indeed! I'm glad to see your coverage of music is being extended as from your "Michael Jackson" issue. I will remember the Chrissie Murray article "Bridges . . . Or Barriers" which guarded against musical insularity (*Wire* 11).

The only negative aspect of the whole thing is my bank balance being depleted by excursions into boxed sets, etc.

JIM MARTYN, West Sussex

#### GROWN MEN WEPT . . .

AS A man in his 40s, it's very embarrassing to walk back from the newsagents carrying a magazine with a picture of Michael Jackson on the cover.

MALCOLM SALMON, Hants

So subscribe - GL.

and I'd be embarrassed to carry a magazine with Malcolm

I MEAN, don't give me a break, GIVE ME A COMPOUND FRACTURE!

GEORGE D DAVIDSON III,  
Athens, Georgia, USA

I SUGGEST that you have hit the nail on the thumb.

HARVEY WOOLF, Berwick-upon-Tweed

#### EUROPE VOTES

I HAVE just received my new magazine. Always nice work. BRAVO. You have no equivalent here and it is always a great pleasure to receive *The Wire*. Let's go for it!

JEROME PERIN, Fontainebleau

I WISH you all a pleasant summer with lots of work so that I get some well-filled *Wires* to read. Great magazine - only fault: too thin!

MARTIN HANSSON, Gothenburg

#### MEANWHILE BACK IN REALITY . . .

DOES THE magazine concern itself with wire? I'm trying to research the contemporary uses of wire for my BA thesis. I'm also trying to find a stockist of varnish-coated thin .2mm diam wire, copper if possible. I'd be grateful for any details you could send me. Hope to hear from you soon.

RACHEL BOLTON, Islington  
Nice try, but no Jim Beam - GL.

I HAVE contacted all the usual jazz music outlets to no avail enquiring about any new solo LP or session by Mike Stern (since his last release, *Jigsaw*, in 1989). Could *The Wire* please print this letter and perhaps news of any new music by Mike? I have always felt that Mike and Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd share both a similar appearance and awesome guitar tone.

Incidentally, I appreciate editor David Cook's argument concerning *The Wire*'s new musical policy. I certainly hope that you will be featuring articles and interviews with John Martyn, The Blue Nile and Kate Bush in future issues.

K BODEN, Barnsley  
David Cook? Hmm, the magazine must've changed more than I realised - GL.

#### AT THE END OF THE DAY . . .

AS A subscriber for 40 issues now, I felt like writing and passing on a bit of personal reader feedback. It seemed to me that with issue 88 *The Wire*, all of a sudden, came of age. I found myself constantly going back to it. Easy to pick up and enjoyable to read.

Gone, for the main part, were the type of album reviews that said more about the reviewer's literary aspirations and sometimes titanic struggles with the English language than about the album in question. In their place are concise, to-the-point assessments such as that by Tony Herrington on the new Scofield album and, in issue 88, Kenny Mathieson on Andrew Hill, Phil McNeill on Willie Dixon and Graham Lock on Shostakovich. More of this please.

At the end of the day you provide a great service to the music, and to those of us who love music. Thank you for that and good luck

S FENEMORE, Ayr



The following are still available (\* indicates that stocks are very low):

- \*1 **Steve Lacy**, Eric Dolphy, Harold Land, *Rox Blake*, John Stevens, Max Roach.
- 12 **Afro Jazz**, Laurin Anderson, Cheri McGehee, Phil Mavris & Roger Turner.
- 18 **Sonny Rollins**, Tommy Chase, Jayne Cortez, Bobby McFerrin, Stanley Jordan, Bernard Taverne, Joe Farrell.
- 19 **Ornette Coleman**, Charlie Haden, Steve Lacy, Slim Gaillard, Jazz Cartoons.
- 20 **Art Blakey**, Hank Mobley, Gato Lato, Bobby Watson, Wynton & Branford Marsalis.
- 21 **Chet Baker**, Pusski Zoo, Jamsiladen Tacoma, Chacho Valdez & Arturo Sandoval, Phil Washington, Michael Nyman, Nicolas Erigone.
- 22 **John Coltrane**, James Blood Ulmer, The Giant Steps, Rubea Blades, Nathan Davis.
- 23 **Bill Laswell**, Louis Tate, Celso Cruz, Anita O'Day, Alan Black, Arto Lindsay.
- 24 **Betty Carter**, Jimmy Smith, Paul Bley, John Abercrombie, Salome Bicho, Maggie Nichols, Vienna Art Orchestra.
- \*25 **Courtney Pine**, Paul Motian, George Coleman, Luciano Berio, Gerry Mulligan.
- \*30 **Chico Freeman**, Alex na Schlappbach, Eddie Harris.
- 32 **Django Bates**, Davey Knowles, Tony Oxley, Dorothea Galat, Weather Report.
- 33 **Sonny Rollins**, Dave Brubeck, The Boats, John Russell.
- 34/35 **Lester Bowie**, Branford Marsalis, Dexter Gordon, Serge Chaboff, Louis Tate, Paul Lightfoot & Paul Lewis, Frank Zappa.
- 36 **Steve Winwood**, Phillip Best, Bill Franklin, Art Farmer, Tambora Kondo.
- 37 **Bobby McFerrin**, Hampton Hawes, Dirty Dozen Brass Band, John Laro.
- 38 **Wynton Marsalis**, Wayne Shorter, Nigel Kennedy.
- 39 **Andy Sheppard**, Gil Evans, Sheila Jordan, Yash Duvvuru.
- 40 **Ornette Coleman**, Charlie Haden, Charlie Rouse, Robert Ashley.
- 41 **Telenius Monks**, Steve Coleman, Steve Swallow, Kronos, Tommy Smith.
- 42 **Horace Silver**, Bud Shank, Nera Shingely, Barry Wiles.
- 43 **Pat Metheny**, Robert Johnson, Albert Collins, Charlie Mariano, Billy Fingers.
- 46/47 **Courtney Pine**, Cecil Taylor, Roland Kirk, Mike & Kate Westbrook, Box Basherbaker, Babi Gonzalez.
- 48 **Joe Henderson**, Krug Oliver, Wayne Marsh, Herman Leonard, Harold Budd, Dave Liebman.
- \*49 **Julius Hemphill**, Frank Morgan & Mike Stern, Billy Jenkins, Clark Tracy, Akron Kaba.
- \*50 **David Holland**, Tommy Smith, 50 Players, Nathan Jazz.
- 51 **Marilyn Crispell**, Andy Kirk, Roland Penn, Gil Evans, Dorothea Rouseau, Caspar Brötzmann.
- 52 **Sonny Rollins**, Ed Blackwell, Hank Roberts, Martin Arco, Ornette Coleman.
- 53 **John Scofield**, Chet Baker, John McLaughlin, Johnny Haden, Van Freeman, Elliott Sharp.
- 54 **Jason Rebello**, Jimmy Rouse, Bob Stewart, Defunkt, Ashdank Hall.
- 55 **David Sanborn**, Barber Little, John Laro, James Newkirk, Lou Gare.
- 56 **Composers**, Carla Bley, John Cage, Misha Mengelberg, Judith Weir, Mike Gibbs.
- 57 **Bird**, Billy Bang, Dorothea Rouseau, Charles McPherson, Red Rodney.
- \*60 **Andy Sheppard**, Jack DeJohnette, Leland Hargrove, Odile de la Martin.
- \*62 **Paul Reid**, Henry Threadgill, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Jackie McLean, Sergey Koryukov, Nina Mue McKenny.
- \*63 **Duke Ellington**, Billy Strayhorn, Burt Alvord, Orphy Robinson, Henry Coward, Roy Eldridge.
- 65 **Bill Frisell**, Anthony Braxton, Jimmy McGuff, Bobby Hutchins, John Harle.
- 66 **Chet Baker**, Peter King, Coleman Hawkins, Bob Berg, Shady Kone.
- 69 **Courtney Pine & Iain Ballamy**, William Breaker, Blazy Baski, Dan Barrett.
- 70/71 **29th Street Saxophone Quartet**, Caminda White, Marvin Smith, Sarah Lee Kowitz, Michael Nyman, Bobby Bradford, John Rae Caliente, Evaristo Allende Of The 80s, British Jazz Supplement, Biggest ever issue!
- \*75 **Roadside Picnic**, Margo On Record - 1, John Safford & Joe



Louise, Annette Proulx, Peter

McDonald, Dorothea, Michael

Petroneau, Andy Sheppard Big

Band

- 76 **John Surman**, Jazz Warriors, Dexter Gordon, Shashor, Kizufuf Pwidericki, Margo On Record - 2, Tommy Smith.

- 77 **McCoy Tyner**, Mary Lou Williams, Kenny Barron, Max Roach, Cheri McGehee, Carol Kold.

- 78 **Sun Ra**, Frank Zappa, Joe Harnell, Eugene Challenor, Vinay Gohla, David Pohnana.

- 79 **Jimmi Hendrix**, Don Cherry, Ray Anderson, Pat Weir, Russell, Fred Widy.

- 80 **Bebo**, Mike On Record - 1, Louis Salari, Scott Hamilton, Eno.

- 81 **Andy Summers**, Steve Coleman, Art Blakey, Mike On Record - 2, Joe Zimovist, Jason Rebello.

- \*82/83 **Quincy Jones**, Cecil Taylor, Ralph Peterson, John Gilmore, Mike On Record - 1, Jack Hammer & Walkman, Elio Moss.

- \*84 **European Jazz**, Eberhard Weber, Dorothea Rouseau, FMP, Pierre Bush.

- \*85 **Louis Moholo**, Evan Parker, Steve Rink, Buster Williams, Don's Charlie Parker, Joe Cox.

- 86 **John Coltrane**, Joan Marshall, Herb Albert, Chicago, Marilyn Crispell, Dick Hicklick-Smith.

- \*87 **Charlie Watts**, Ralph Moore, John Coltrane, Bob Marley, Mowday.

- 88 **Michael Jackson**, Woffgang Amadeus Mozart, Elio Castro, Akidabab Brothers, David Byrne, John Coltrane.

- 89 **John Lee Hooker**, Kraftwerk, Mahad Breaker, Joe Stravinsky, Greg Only, Nutsa Ude.

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